
Plan Overview

A Data Management Plan created using DMPonline

Title: An exploration of methods for preserving live-service videogames: the role and responsibility of the developer-curator

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Principal Investigator: Will Butler

Data Manager: Will Butler

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Template: BSU Data Management Plan

ORCID iD: 0009-0003-5247-4021

Project abstract:

The aim of this research is to explore ways in which live-service videogames can be preserved and advocate for further cultural understanding for why they should be preserved and by whom. Videogames as cultural artefacts are transient in nature. Whether positioned using theories of videogames as objects within "participatory cultures" (Lowood, 2006) or viewing them through the lens of their "trajectories" (Abott, 2014) from development stages through to having content produced through them by player; who in turn become "co-producers" through gameplay. The loss of videogames and their history through obsolescence is more critical with live-service videogames which are specifically designed to keep players engaged over the course of a lifecycle with new content and updates. As such, they are moving targets for preservation and incomplete enterprises by definition.

The role of the 'developer-curator' is notable because as producers of videogames, developers - or any body that produces videogames - have unfettered access to the constituent parts of videogames before they are released as products. This situates them in an unique and powerful position to contribute to an institutional cultural shift toward a future where games preservation is a larger priority.

This research intends to explore the ways in which developers can play a role in ensuring that there is an institutional record of these live-service videogames as they become under threat to obsolescence. The project will apply anthropological-adjacent and ethnographic methodologies such as interviews with a range of people (developers) and using discourse analysis tools such as open coding to identify recurring themes and blockers - whether their technological, cultural, or economic - in order to develop methods, draw conclusions, identify areas of further study and inquiry, and produce an actionable 'Developer's Toolkit' which turns these conclusion into best practices.

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An exploration of methods for preserving live-service videogames: the role and responsibility of the developer-curator

Overview

Name of Principal Investigator(s)

Will Butler

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Investigator(s) contact details

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Funding application title

An exploration of methods for preserving live-service videogames: the role and responsibility of the developer-curator

Funding body

Self-funded.

Total funding required

N/A

Project description

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Data Collection

What data will you collect or create?

Notes from interviews will be created and stored as MS Word documents.

During this research I will be conducting semi-structured interviews with game developers. This will be digital audio data which will be saved as .mp3 files.

These audio files will be transcribed into a text document (MS Word) and input into NVivo for coding. The coded data will then be exported back into a text file (HTML or .txt).The audio recordings will be deleted from the devices once the transcriptions are complete and assessed for accuracy.

Written materials (consent forms, information sheets) will be created in OneDrive and stored as PDF files.

How will the data be collected or created?

The interviews will be conducted either in-person or via Microsoft teams. If the interviews are in person, the conversation will be recorded on both a ZOOM H4 recorder and my phone (.m4a). The Microsoft Teams recordings (.mp4) will be saved as well.

In order to preserve anonymity, each participant will be assigned a moniker. The naming convention for the files will follow a format of YYYYMMDD - Participant Moniker - Subject - Version - Qualifying info.

Example: *240814 Participant B - Asset Creation Interview, ver1*

As the sole researcher, I will be maintaining consistency of formatting across all data, ensuring the

same tools such as recorders and coding software is used throughout.

Documentation and Metadata

What documentation and metadata will accompany the data?

The data collected is confidential but anonymised transcripts will be available to be shared beyond the research team. The blank consent forms and BSU ethical approval forms will accompany the data.

Ethics and Legal Compliance

How will you manage any ethical issues?

Participants will be given an information and consent form. They can withdraw at any time prior to the submission of the thesis. I will not share information about participants with anyone else other than staff involved in the research (supervisory team). The information that is collected will be kept confidential and stored safely on the two-factor authenticate cloud storage. All responses will be anonymised by using pseudonyms.

As part of this project, the project will be reviewed for ethical concerns and approved by the research ethics committee at Bath Spa University.

How will you manage copyright and intellectual property (IP) issues?

The raw data (audio) will not be available for reuse. Raw data will remain the property of the investigators; summary reports will be accessible to all participants. Final reports will remain under the ownership of the investigator and the employing institution. Published reports may appear in academic publications in line with current licencing arrangements.

Storage and Backup

How will the data be stored and backed up during the research?

Interview audio transcriptions will be stored onto BathSPAdata. Transcription of the audio file will take place through NVivo. The transcriptions will be reviewed for accuracy against the audio files stored on my password protected devices. Following this review, the audio files will be deleted.

How will you manage access and security?

Data collected is secure and can only be accessed by myself to ensure data is processed in compliance with GDPR. All data is anonymous and stored on BathSPAdata.

Selection and Preservation

Which data should be retained, shared and/or preserved?

Data will be retained by the primary investigator during analysis. No raw data (audio recorded interviews) will be retained beyond the life of the project. Anonymised, transcribed and analysed data will be retained and can be shared with colleagues through BathSPAdata.

What is the long-term preservation plan for the dataset?

The dataset (audio recordings of focus group) will be stored securely for the duration of the project. They will be destroyed at the end of the project and will not be available to others. Anonymised data will be preserved this for the long term, it will be stored on BathSPAdata where the policy is to retain data for 10 years from the date of any publication.

Data Sharing

How will the data be shared?

Anonymised data will be made available for future use by researchers external to the project team through BathSPAdata.

Are any restrictions on data sharing required?

Where necessary, interview transcripts will not be available in their entirety in order to protect the anonymity of participants. I will try to ensure that as much of the interview transcript as possible is made available.

Responsibilities and Resources

Who will be responsible for data management?

Will Butler

What resources will you require to deliver your plan?

N/A

Signoff

I confirm that I have read the Bath Spa University Research Data Policy and any relevant policy for my research funder.

William Butler
31/05/24