

Project Proposal

by Hamza Qasim

Submission date: 27-Oct-2023 08:46AM (UTC+0100)

Submission ID: 214163100

File name: 31769_Hamza_Qasim_Project_Proposal_525049_1525857161.docx (386.15K)

Word count: 2131

Character count: 11397

Research Proposal

Hamza Qasim

University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Independent Project // ACCA6020

Richard W. Morgan

1699 words

Contents Page

Contents Page	2
Introduction	3
Background to the Proposed Research	4
Aims & Objectives	6
Aims	6
Objectives	6
Methodology	7
Research Methodology	7
Philosophy	7
Approach	7
Strategies	7
Literature Review	7
Ethnography	7
Survey	7
Experiment	8
Risks & Limitations	8
Ethical Issues	8
Validity, Reliability and Generalisability	9
Validity	9
Reliability	9
Generalisability	9
Data Evaluation Methods	9
Data Collection	9
Data Evaluation	10
Development Methodology	10
Software Development Methodology	10
Resources & Planning	10
Hardware Resources	10
Software Resources	11
Information Resources	11
Human Resources	11
Project Plan	12
References	13

Introduction

This project aims to look at the morality and ethics behind cheating in video games.

Richard W. Morgan would be the ideal supervisor for a project such as this due to his knowledge when it comes to game design and history. There is no industrial partner for this project as it is mainly theoretical and focuses more on the minds of the individuals. The background reason for this project is to look into human psychology and behaviour to commit actions that others in society find to be irredeemable or offensive. The primary researcher is a suitable person to carry out this research due to having 20 years of experience playing games, they have dealt with individuals across multiple games that cheat, both in single player and multiplayer. They have also created several mods and cheats for certain single player games.

Background to the Proposed Research

The project as a whole will be looking at the ethics and morality behind an individual's intention to cheat in a video game. There are several theories to further understand why this is a controversial topic such as but not limited to:

Virtue Ethics: A term first coined by the philosopher Aristotle^[1], this theory suggests that cheating in video games can harm a player's character and moral values, leading to a lack of integrity and honesty^[2].

Fair Play: As summed by A. John Simmons in *The Principle of Fair Play*^[3], most citizens within a just community have moral obligations and a need to obey the law and follow just rules. This theory suggests that cheating in video games violates this basic law and undermines the integrity of the game^[4].

Cognitive Science: Celia Hodent^[5] is one of the main researchers in this field, which explores the psychological and cognitive factors that contribute to cheating in video games, such as competitive motivation, self-esteem, and aggression^[4].

Cyberpsychology: Berni Good is a former member of the games industry and an expert cyberpsychologist that has been investigating psychology in game design for a good part of her career now^[6]. This field of research explores the social and psychological aspects of gaming, both online and offline. This field primarily focuses on the significant behavioural and attitude changes a player may develop when cheating or playing against cheaters^[7].

Game Design: This field of research explores how companies in the industry use in-game purchases and monetisation mechanics as a form of either promoting or preventing cheating^[8]. It can be seen as prevention when the pay-to-win items are available to everyone who spends

money but can be seen as a way to promote cheating to players who believe that pay-to-win items should not be available in competitive games ^[9].

Social Network Analysis: This field of research focuses on the social dynamics of cheating in online games as well as the use of social networks to advertise and sell cheating programs and influences players' behaviours to cheat ^[10].

Some of the notable researchers who have done similar work to the specific topic focused in this project are members from the University of Bamberg who presented their report at the Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences this year. They used a more statistical approach to this topic and mainly focused on the revenue loss for publishers in the games industry ^[11]. This project will be looking at the more theoretical side of things as well as psychological, behavioural and societal issues that may arise when a player decides to cheat in a video game.

Aims & Objectives

Aims

The aim of this project is to investigate the impacts on the lives of players who choose to cheat in video games, with a focus on changes the player may go through. The project will explore the ethical and moral concerns surrounding cheating in games as well as examine how using cheats or hacks affect other players in a multiplayer game.

Objectives

1. To identify the reasons why players cheat in video games.
2. To examine the impact of cheating on the player's mental health and personality.
3. To explore the social impact of cheating on the gaming community as a whole.
4. To analyse the ethical and moral concerns surrounding cheating in games.
5. To examine the effects of cheating on other players in a multiplayer game.
6. To identify alternative solutions to cheating in games.

Methodology

Research Methodology

The research will be conducted in the form of surveys, interviews, an observation, and some audio recordings of gameplay.

Philosophy

Phenomenology is the main philosophy selected for this project as it relies on knowledge that is subjective.

Approach

The main approach is inductive as it involves collecting the data, analysing it and then developing a theory using the data collected.

Strategies

Literature Review

The project aims to look at the main theories, prominent researchers, and the positive and negative factors that may affect the project. It will confirm that the project is practical and helps in the long run to compare results with other academic articles.

Ethnography

The researcher is already a part of major gaming networks and has links to members within the industry as well as several people who use illegitimate software and hardware to gain an unfair advantage over other players. The issue with this strategy is that it is more time consuming and the researcher may be biased.

Survey

A survey is a great way to understand a participant's feelings on a particular subject. It will allow the researcher to collect a large amount of data in a short period of time.

The survey will be confidential as it will retain no information regarding the participants and only their thoughts and opinions.

Experiment

An experiment in regards to cheating will be taking place as the final project demonstration. This strategy is important as the researcher can observe participants in a real world setting. This only exists to hypothesise that the rapid scale of difficulty can force a player to cheat in a video game.

Risks & Limitations

There are no limitations to the project however there are several risks. For recording audio, there may be a chance that an anonymous participant could be identified using their voice. To combat this, the researcher will be applying a voice filter to all audio recordings if they are to be published. All the data collected is to be kept on a secure and encrypted Google Drive, with access available from any device as long as the researcher is logged in. This adds a risk of human error where the researcher can forget to log out, to mitigate this, Google itself has an option to sign out of all devices and sessions everywhere.

Ethical Issues

In a project which focuses on such a controversial topic, there is a possibility of participants getting heated over interview or survey questions. In an interview, the participant may lash out verbally at the researcher. To mitigate any forms of violence, the interviews will be conducted online with a structured question system.

Validity, Reliability and Generalisability

Validity

The majority of proposed data collection methods are valid as they are designed to elicit rich and detailed data on players' experiences with cheating in computer video games.

Reliability

Some methods such as interviews and surveys may pose to be unreliable as participants can lie when it comes to answering questions of a controversial nature.

Generalisability

All methods of data collection can be generalised if they are administered to a representative sample size of the gaming community and thus can be applied to the wider community.

Data Evaluation Methods

Data Collection

The primary way would be a detailed survey, which requires approximately 8 participants to give their thoughts and opinions. Interviews will be taking place at a smaller scale of 3-4 participants and alongside that there will be audio recordings and observations for the rest of the participants who take part in the game prototype. Since observations are difficult to maintain and require the utmost confidentiality, the project aims to have 2 participants. A total minimum of 10 participants is something to look for in a project like this. If there is a lack of participants in any of the collection methods above, further information and statistics can be found via other scholarly and academic research on similar topics to that of this project.

Data Evaluation

The project will mainly be using content and factor analysis to evaluate the data collected. A little part of regression analysis will be used to analyse relationships related to and identify factors that strongly associate with cheating.

Development Methodology

Alongside the research, part of the development methodology is to make a simple game prototype with a very frustrating curve of difficulty as one progresses through the game. This prototype will have a section for cheats to let participants choose whether or not they want to cheat. The section only appears after a certain number of retries just to encourage the thought of cheating to beat the level.

Software Development Methodology

The project demonstration will primarily be made using Unreal Engine, Blender, and Adobe Substance Painter. The reasoning behind this is that the researcher has a lot of experience in using these programs and they would be ideal to make a small scale game for end of year demonstration for this project.

Resources & Planning

The planning for the project is done online via a tool called Asana^[12] which tracks every task for the project. The resources required are as follows:

Hardware Resources

A PC with networking capabilities.

Software Resources

Discord as the primary form of contact with certain participants, it works well to share screens and record audio. Unreal Engine, Blender, Adobe Substance Painter for the project demo.

Information Resources

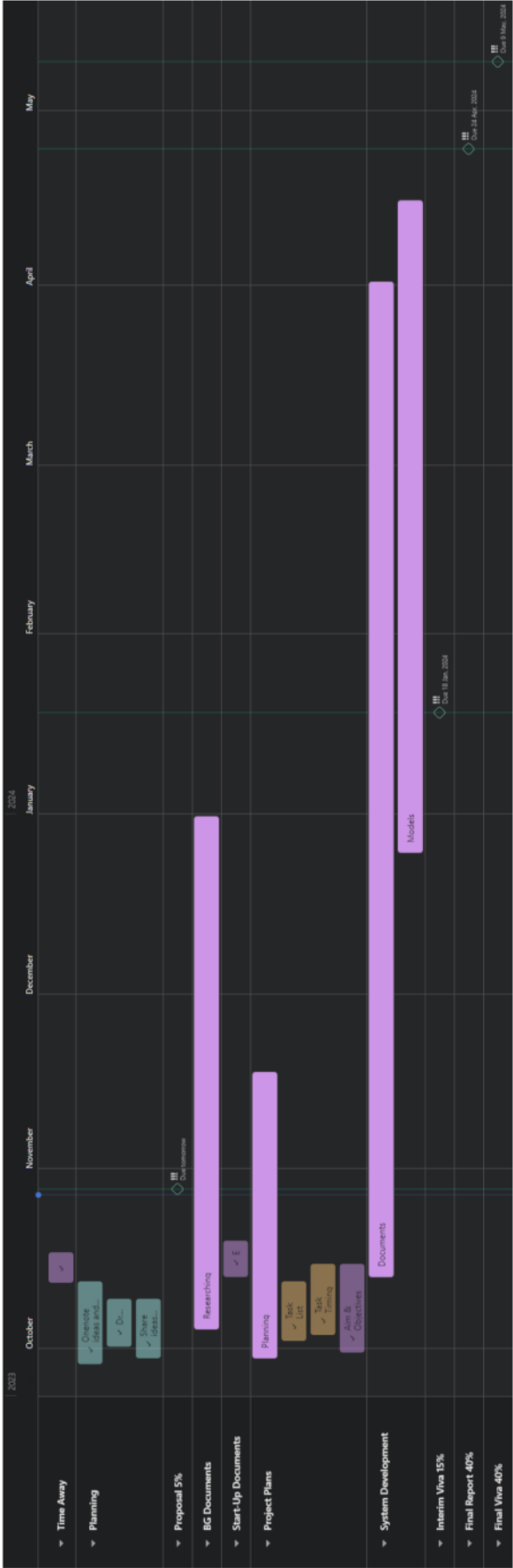
External data can be found via scholarly articles and journals online as well as through the UWTSD library.

Human Resources

The majority of participants will be the researchers' friends, family members, and acquaintances. Surveys will be sent out via Discord as that is the platform used by a majority of individuals who play games.

Project Plan

Below is a simple Gantt chart that includes milestones such as submission dates and vivas. This also included tasks that are yet to be done and those that have already been done.



References

- [1] R. Kraut, "Aristotle's ethics," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-ethics/> (accessed Oct. 26, 2023).
- [2] K. K. Kimppa and A. K. Bissett, "The ethical significance of cheating in online computer games," *The International Review of Information Ethics*, vol. 4, pp. 33–34, 2005.
doi:10.29173/irie165
- [3] A. J. Simmons, "The principle of fair play," *Moral Principles and Political Obligations*, vol. 8, no. 4, pp. 307–337, Summer 1979. doi:10.1515/9780691213248-007
- [4] S. J. Lee, E. J. Jeong, D. Y. Lee, and G. M. Kim, "Why do some users become enticed to cheating in competitive online games? an empirical study of cheating focused on competitive motivation, self-esteem, and aggression," *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 12, Nov. 2021.
doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2021.768825
- [5] C. Hodent, *The Psychology of Video Games*. London, England: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2021.
- [6] M. Staff, "Using psychology in Game Design," MCV/DEVELOP, <https://mcvuk.com/business-news/media-pr/using-psychology-in-game-design/> (accessed Oct. 26, 2023).
- [7] K. Stuart, "Medal of dishonour: Why do so many people cheat in online video games?," The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/games/2021/feb/24/medal-of-dishonour-cheating-video-games> (accessed Oct. 26, 2023).
- [8] G. Freeman, K. Wu, N. Nower, and D. Y. Wohn, "Pay to win or pay to cheat: How players of competitive online games perceive fairness of in-game purchases," *Proceedings of the*

ACM on Human-Computer Interaction, vol. 6, no. CHI PLAY, pp. 1–24, 2022.

doi:10.1145/3549510

[9] C. Hodent, “Ethics in the videogame industry: A Mythbusting and scientific approach,”

Celia Hodent, <https://celiahodent.com/ethics-in-the-videogame-industry/> (accessed Oct. 26, 2023).

[10] J. Blackburn, N. Kourtellis, J. Skvoretz, M. Ripeanu, and A. Iamnitchi, “Cheating in online games: A Social Network Perspective,” *ACM Transactions on Internet Technology*, vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 1–28, Jan. 2014. doi:10.1145/2602570

[11] J. Menzel, M. Meier, and C. Maier, “Online gaming and personality: Explaining gamers’ cheating intention,” ScholarSpace, <https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/items/4c0d7ba9-5758-422d-abe1-fe759e34ca01> (accessed Oct. 26, 2023).

[12] Asana, “Manage your team’s work, projects, & tasks online,” Asana, <https://asana.com/> (accessed Oct. 26, 2023).

Project Proposal

GRADEMARK REPORT

FINAL GRADE

72/100

GENERAL COMMENTS

1. Intro /Aims & Objectives (14/20)

The introduction is good and though the research topic is raised there are no specific mentions to deliverables early on where this could be important – including a brief overview of these might enhance the work.

Aims and objectives are clearly defined in the proposal. To build on this we may go further and specify the benefits of researching this topic – what can be gained and how it may serve a useful purpose in future.

2. Background to the Project / Literature Review (15/20)

A very good level of background knowledge has been demonstrated in the submitted work, with theories, principles and authors cited for different kinds of cheating in games.

Ethical consideration has been given to the nature of the study, in particular the response of sample groups providing unreliable data based on judgement and perception. Anonymising the recorded data has been suggested, which is good – this may incentivise a more honest response.

3. Project Design (23/30)

Consider looking into the work of Jakob Nielsen and others who specialise in interview and survey development – this can be quite an involved process, but a well-constructed

survey/questionnaire will
produce much more useful data and results.

Reliability issues regarding the responses given
are a good consideration – it may be wise to
consider recording the interviews
in order to retrieve information from them, as a
second or third viewing or
playthrough may reveal more than what is being
said.

4. Resources / Planning (10/15)

Deliverables are outlined in the later stages of
the proposal in the form of a 'flawed'/difficult game
experience, giving people
opportunities to cheat. It may be good to mention
this in the introduction as
well. Perhaps a little more information on this
would also be good to see, but
I do appreciate this may be developed as time
goes by in the project.

A Project plan has been supplied which is good
to see – this shows consideration for management
and project planning. This
could be broken down further though, to get a
good idea of how big some of the
tasks might be, and this would allow for more
reliable timeframes and planning.

5. Document Presentation (11/15)

The submitted work is presented very well and
meets
the standards required of this academic level.

A bibliography has been supplied in IEEE format
with a number of relevant links listed – these have
been retrieved
independently. Good work.

PAGE 1

PAGE 2

PAGE 3

PAGE 4

PAGE 5

PAGE 6

PAGE 7

PAGE 8

PAGE 9

PAGE 10

PAGE 11

PAGE 12

PAGE 13

PAGE 14
