

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL – INTRODUCTORY NOTES

In order for research to result in benefit and minimise risk of harm, it must be conducted ethically. A researcher may not be covered by the University's insurance if ethical approval has not been obtained prior to commencement.

The University follows the OECD Frascati manual definition of **research activity**:

"[C]reative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications".

As such this covers activities undertaken by:

- Members of staff (academic staff or support staff);
- Individuals holding honorary title from the University;
- Postgraduate research students;

In all of these cases ethical review is required regardless of discipline.

The individual undertaking the research activity is known as the **lead researcher**.

Ethical approval is not required for routine audits, performance reviews, quality assurance studies, testing within normal educational requirements, and literary or artistic criticism.

For most projects you will only need to complete sections in the main part of the form. A few projects will need more detailed ethical consideration and will need you to fill in sections in an appendix. At some points in this form you will be asked questions about your research in the following way:

1	Does your research involve <<something specific>>?	YES	Click to continue to appendix <<N>>	NO	Continue to the next section
2	Have you completed appendix <<N>>?	YES	☐	NO	☒

Clicking in the appropriate box will take you to the appropriate location in the text. At the end of each appendix is a box. Clicking on this will return you to the question that originally took you to the appendix.

Return to the main form

NB These clickable links will only work if you are editing the document in the desktop version of Word, not the browser version. Please download and save the form before editing it.

Guidance notes are provided as comments or as text **IN GREEN** throughout this form. Please ensure that the comments are removed and that the green text is replaced by your own text or removed as appropriate BEFORE submitting this form.

Please ensure that you have read the UWTSD Research Ethics and Integrity Policy and the UWTSD Research Data Management Policy BEFORE submitting this form.

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

SECTION A: About You (Lead Researcher)

1	Full Name:	Aaron Young			
2	Tick all boxes that apply:	Member of staff:	☐	Honorary research fellow:	☐
	Undergraduate Student ☐	Taught Postgraduate Student	☒	Postgraduate Research Student	☐
3	Institute/Academic Discipline/Centre:	University Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD)			
4	Campus:	IQ Campus			
5	E-mail address:	2205141@student.uwtsd.ac.uk			
6	Contact Telephone Number:	07917 847976			
7	Project Title	A World of Their Own: Exploring Narrative Immersion, Fandoms and Emotional Regulation Through Fictional Worlds			
8	Proposed Start Date	07/07/2026	Proposed End Date	30/09/2026	
For students:					
9	Student Number:	2205141			
10	Programme of Study:	MSc Applied Psychology			
11	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Dr Paul Hutchings			

SECTION B: Grant or Contract Funding

1	Has your research been awarded, applied for, or intend to apply for external funding?	YES	Click to continue to appendix 1	NO	Continue to the next section
2	Have you completed appendix 1?	YES	☐	NO	☒

SECTION C: Internal and External Ethical Guidance Materials

Ethical Guidance Documents		
Please list the core ethical guidance documents that have been referred to during the completion of this form (including any discipline-specific codes of research ethics, location-specific codes of research ethics, and also any specific ethical guidance relating to the proposed methodology). Please tick to confirm that your research proposal adheres to these codes and guidelines. You may add rows to this table if needed.		
1	UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Policy	☒
2	UWTSD Research Data Management Policy	☒
3	UWTSD Open Access Publications Policy	☐
4	UWTSD Export Control Policy	☐
<i>Required if Appendix 8 completed</i>		
5	UWTSD Trusted Research and Innovation Policy	☐

6	BPS Ethical guidelines for internet-mediated research (June 2021)	☒
	BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct (December 2021)	
	BPS Code of Human Research Ethics (April 2021)	
	BPS Data Protection Regulation – Guidance for Research (December 2018)	

SECTION D: External Collaborative Research Activity

1	Does your research involve collaborating partners at another institution or organisation?	YES	Click to continue to appendix 2	NO	Continue to the next section
2	Have you completed appendix 2?	YES	☐	NO	☒

SECTION E: Details of Research Activity

Aims, Vision and Approach of the Research (maximum 200 words per section)	
Please outline what are you hoping to achieve with your proposed work and how will you deliver it?	
1	Research aims and objectives This study aims to investigate the relationships between narrative immersion, psychological functions of fandoms and emotion regulation among adults who engage with fictional worlds and fandom communities. Research suggests that engagement with fictional narratives, franchises and worlds may provide psychological benefits including opportunities for emotional processing, social connection and emotional regulation (Green & Brock, 2000; Mar & Oatley, 2008; Wolf, 2012). Fandom participation has also been associated with functions of purpose, escapism, and belonging (Chadborn et al., 2017). The objectives of the study are: • To measure levels of narrative immersion in adults who engage with fictional worlds. • To assess fandom functions relating to purpose/inspiration, escapism, and belonging. • To examine relationships between narrative immersion and emotion regulation strategies. • To examine relationships between fandom functions and emotion regulation strategies. • To explore participants' subjective experiences of how fictional worlds influence their emotional lives through open-ended survey questions. The study seeks to contribute to understanding how engagement with fictional worlds may relate to emotional wellbeing and everyday emotion regulation.
2	Vision

Engagement with expansive fictional worlds through books, films, television, games, and online fandoms is a significant part of contemporary modern life. Despite growing interest in narrative and media psychology, little research has examined how immersion into fictional worlds and associated fandom participation relate to emotion regulation in adults.

Narrative Transportation Theory proposes that individuals can become deeply immersed in fictional narratives, resulting in meaningful cognitive and emotional experiences (Green & Brock, 2000). Similarly, Mar & Oatley (2008) suggest that fiction provides opportunities to explore social and emotional experiences in a psychologically meaningful way. Research has also identified fandom participation as a source of belonging, inspiration and stress relief (Chadborn et al., 2017).

By examining the relationship between narrative immersion, fandom functions and emotion regulation, this research aims to advance understanding of the potential psychological significance of fictional engagement. Findings may contribute to future research concerning wellbeing, emotional coping and adaptive uses of media in everyday life as this type of engagement becomes increasingly popular and relevant.

3 Approach

This study will employ an exploratory, cross-sectional, mixed-methods design using an online survey for adults aged 18 years and over.

Quantitative data will be collected using established self-report measures. Narrative immersion will be assessed using a lightly adapted Narrative Transportation Scale (Green & Brock, 2000). Fandom functions will be measured using the Fandom Functions Scale (Chadborn et al., 2017), which assesses reasons for engagement such as purpose, escapism, and belonging. Emotion regulation will be measured using the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (Gross & John, 2003), which assesses preferences towards cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression.

Participants will also complete optional open-ended questions exploring how engagement with fictional worlds influences their emotional experiences and wellbeing. Qualitative responses will be analysed using thematic analysis to provide context to findings, while quantitative data will be analysed using descriptive statistics, correlational analyses, and regression analyses.

This methodology allows for efficient collection of data from a diverse adult sample while minimising participant burden and risk. Participation will be voluntary, anonymous, and conducted remotely. Potential risks are expected to be minimal and limited to mild emotional discomfort when reflecting on personal experiences.

4 Location of research activity

Identify all locations where research activity will take place.

The research will be conducted entirely online using a secure survey platform (Qualtrics). Participants will complete the study remotely using their own devices connected to the internet.

Recruitment will take place through online channels, including social media platforms, fandom-related online communities and university-affiliated recruitment opportunities where appropriate.

No face-to-face data collection, laboratory procedures or clinical interventions will be used. The study will be managed remotely by the researcher from the University of Wales Trinity Saint David in the United Kingdom.

5	Will any of your research be undertaken outside of the UK?	YES	Click to continue to appendix 3	NO	Continue to the next section
6	Have you completed any of appendix 3?	YES	☐	NO	☒

SECTION F: Research Methods

Will the research activity include:		YES	NO
1	Use of a questionnaire or similar research instrument?	☒	☐
2	Use of interviews?	☐	☒
3	Use of focus groups?	☐	☒
4	Use of participant diaries?	☐	☒
5	Use of video or audio recording?	☐	☒
6	Use of computer-generated log files?	☐	☒
7	Participant observation with their knowledge?	☐	☒
8	Participant observation without their knowledge?	☐	☒
9	Access to personal or confidential information without the participants' specific consent?	☐	☒
10	Administration of any questions, test stimuli, presentation that may be experienced as physically, mentally or emotionally harmful / offensive?	☒	☐
11	Performance of any acts which may cause embarrassment or affect self-esteem?	☐	☒
12	Investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?	☐	☒
13	Use of procedures that involve deception?	☒	☐
14	Administration of any substance, agent or placebo?	☐	☒
15	Working with live vertebrate animals?	☐	☒
16	Procedures that may have a negative impact on the environment?	☐	☒
17	Other primary data collection methods. Please indicate the type of data collection method(s) below.	☐	☐
Details of any other primary data collection method:			
(this box should expand as you type)			

SECTION G: Research Participants

Research participants include people who will be taking part in your research as providers of research data (e.g. being interviewed, answering questionnaires, or doing user testing of hardware or software). This includes animal participants.					
1	Does your research involve human or non-human participants?	YES	Continue this section	NO	Click to continue to section N

Participant numbers and source
How will you ensure an appropriately convened sample group in order to meet the aims of the research? Give details for subgroups separately, if appropriate. How will any potential pitfalls, for example dual roles or potential for coercion, be addressed?

1	How many participants will be recruited and how was the number decided upon?	Approximately 200–300 participants will be recruited for this study. This sample size will provide sufficient statistical power for the planned correlational and multiple regression analyses while being achievable in an online-based MSc dissertation project. Previous research examining relationships between multiple variables using surveys have commonly used samples within this range. Recruitment will take place through online fandom communities and social media platforms, making this sample size realistic and achievable. The final sample size will depend on participant availability and the number of complete responses received.
2	Who will the participants be?	Participants will be adults aged 18 years and over who engage with fictional worlds and fictional media franchises through books, films, television series, video games or related fandom activities. Participants will be recruited from online fandom communities, including Reddit and Discord groups, as well as through personal social media networks. The study is open to individuals regardless of gender, ethnicity, nationality or educational background, provided they can understand the participant information sheet and provide informed consent. Individuals under the age of 18 will not be eligible to participate.
3	How will you identify the participants?	Participants will be identified through their engagement with online communities and social media spaces focused on fictional media franchises, including Reddit, Discord, and other fandom-related platforms. Individuals who meet the inclusion criteria, see the study advertisement and choose to access it will be able to participate.
4	Will you be excluding any groups of people, and if so what is the rationale for that?	Individuals under the age of 18 will be excluded from participation. This study is designed for adults and restricting participation to those aged 18 years and over avoids additional ethical and consent requirements associated with research involving minors. Although we cannot completely ensure that all responses will be from people 18 or older due to the anonymous and online nature, recruitment will be sought via typically 18+ online forums such as reddit or discord. Participants will confirm that they are aged 18 years or over as part of the consent process. Individuals who are unable to understand the information sheet (written in English) or provide informed consent will also be excluded.
5	Will the research involve any element of deception? If yes, please describe why this is necessary and whether participants will be informed at the end of the study	The study will involve partial disclosure of the broad research topic. Participants will be informed that the study examines engagement with fictional worlds and psychological experiences; however, the precise relationships being investigated between narrative immersion, fandom functions, and emotion regulation will not be disclosed until the debrief stage. This is to minimise demand characteristics and reduce the likelihood that participants alter their responses due to awareness of the study's objectives. Participants will receive a full and comprehensive explanation of the research aims, objectives and why narrative immersion and fandom functions may be related to emotional regulation within the debrief information provided at the end of the study.

6	Describe whether participants will be able to withdraw from the study, and up to what point (eg if data is to be anonymised). If withdrawal is not possible, after a certain point, explain why not.	Participation is entirely voluntary. Participants may skip any questions they do not want to answer and may withdraw from the study at any time before submitting their survey responses by closing their browser window. Withdrawal will no longer be possible once responses have been submitted, as no identifying information will be collected and all data will be anonymous. As a result, individual responses cannot be identified or removed after submission.
7	How long will the participant have to decide whether to take part in the research?	Participants will be provided with a Participant Information Sheet before accessing the survey and may take as much time as they require to decide whether to participate. Participation will only proceed after informed consent has been provided electronically. As the study is conducted online, individuals can choose to access the survey immediately or return later before deciding whether to take part.
8	What arrangements have been made for participants who might have difficulties understanding verbal explanations or written information, or who have particular communication needs that should be taken into account to facilitate their involvement in the research?	All study materials, including the Participant Information Sheet, consent form, and questionnaire, will be written in clear and accessible English. Participants must be aged 18+ and able to read and understand English to provide informed consent and complete the survey. The online format allows participants to complete the study at their own pace and take as long as needed to answer questionnaire items or decide to participate. Individuals who are unable to understand the study information or provide informed consent will not be eligible to participate.

SECTION H: Research with Vulnerable People

1	Are your participants classed as vulnerable people?	YES	Click to continue to appendix 4	NO	Continue to the next section
2	Have you completed appendix 4?	YES	☐	NO	☒

SECTION I: Research Involving Animals

1	Are your participants non-human animals?	YES	Click to continue to appendix 5	NO	Continue to the next section
2	Have you completed appendix 5?	YES	☐	NO	☒

SECTION J: Research with the Prison Service or the Probation Service

1	Are your participants staff or offenders within the Prison Service or the Probation service?	YES	Click to continue to appendix 6	NO	Continue to the next section
2	Have you completed appendix 6?	YES	☐	NO	☒

SECTION K: Health and Social Care Research

1	Are your participants selected due to their health or social care needs?	YES	Click to continue to appendix 7	NO	Continue to the next section
2	Have you completed appendix 7?	YES	☐	NO	☒

SECTION L: Types of Personal Data

Personal Data		YES	NO
Does the research activity involve personal data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 and the Data Protection Act 2018)?			
1	Personal data means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('data subject'). An identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person. Any video or audio recordings of participants and transcription of such are considered to be personal data.	☒	☐
If you ticked YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected:			
Limited personal demographic data will be collected, including participant's age, gender and country of residence. This data is needed to describe the study sample and explore whether demographic characteristics may influence the outcomes and variables under investigation. No directly identifiable information, such as names, email addresses, telephone numbers, IP addresses or social media usernames will be collected. Participants will complete the survey anonymously and will be instructed not to include any personally identifiable information in their open-ended responses. No special category data will be collected.			

Special Category Data		YES	NO
Does the research involve the processing of special category data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 and the Data Protection Act 2018)?			
2	Racial or ethnic origin	☐	☒
3	Political opinions	☐	☒
4	Religious or philosophical beliefs	☐	☒
5	Genetic, biometric or health data	☐	☒
6	Sex life or sexual orientation	☐	☒
7	Trade union membership	☐	☒
If you ticked YES to any of questions L2-L7, provide a description of the data and explain why this special category data needs to be collected to support the research and that it is in the public interest to do so:			
8	(this box should expand as you type)		

9	Please describe how the research has been designed to gather the minimum amount of personal data necessary for the specified research purpose:			
This study only collects the minimum personal data needed to meet the research objectives. Demographic information only includes age, gender, and country of residence. No directly identifiable information, such as names, email addresses, telephone numbers, IP addresses or social media usernames will be collected.				
10	Demonstrate that the processing is not likely to cause substantial damage or distress to individuals and that their interests will be safeguarded:			
Participation is entirely voluntary, anonymous and focused on non-clinical experiences of engagement with fictional worlds. Participants can skip any questions they do not wish to answer and may withdraw prior to survey submission. Appropriate participant debriefing materials and signposting to online support services will be provided in the debrief.				
11	Demonstrate that the data will not be used to take any action or make decisions in relation to the individuals concerned:			
The data collected will only be used for academic research purposes under academic supervision. No decisions or actions will be taken in relation to individual participants, and no attempt will be made to identify/contact participants from their responses.				
12	Data should be anonymised wherever possible, either at point of capture or once collated. If the data cannot be anonymised, and if pseudonymisation is not possible, demonstrate why the that is possible. If special category data cannot be anonymised, explicit consent to share that data must normally be obtained.			
N/A				
13	If special category data cannot be anonymised, will you obtain explicit consent to share that data?	YES ☐	NO ☐	N/A ☒

SECTION M: Participant Information and Consent

Information for participants It is normally expected that those participating in research should do so having given their informed consent. If this is not appropriate or practical, explicit justification must be provided, in line with prevailing disciplinary conventions. Please note however, that informed consent to participate in the research is separate from consent to process (e.g. collect, analyse, store, reuse or share) personal data, as the University's lawful basis for processing personal data in research activities is part of its 'public task'.		YES	NO	N/A
1	Will you obtain written consent for participation?	☐	☒	☐
2	Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	☒	☐	☐
3	Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	☒	☐	☐
4	Will you explain to participants that refusal to participate in the research will not affect their treatment or education (if relevant)?	☒	☐	☐

5	If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?	☐	☐	☒
6	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	☒	☐	☐
7	Will participants be made aware of how you will treat any information that may reasonably be considered as confidential?	☒	☐	☐
8	If your research requires your participants to sign up for a service provided by an external company or organisation will you inform them that their data may be stored and processed outside UWTSD?	☐	☐	☒
9	Will you give participants the UWTSD Privacy Notice for Research?	☒	☐	☐
If you have answered NO to any of questions M1-M8, please provide justification detailing why this is necessary for the research.				
10	As all research is conducted online, written consent will not be possible for this study. However, the BPS Ethics guidelines for internet-mediated research states that "It is recommended good practice to include a designated consent page as part of an online questionnaire with check boxes (for example) in response to explicit consent statements". As such, the use of check boxes is sufficient for participants to indicate they have read and understood key consent information.			
Informed consent: Describe the arrangements to inform potential participants, before providing consent, of what is involved in participating. Describe the arrangements for participants to provide full consent before the research begins. If gaining consent in this way is inappropriate, explain how consent will be obtained and recorded.				
11	Potential participants will view an Information Sheet before starting the full survey. This will explain the purpose of the study (without risking demand characteristics), describe what participation involves, the eligibility criteria, the voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality agreements, data handling and the right to withdraw. Participants will read this information and decide whether they wish to take part before continuing. Informed consent will be obtained electronically through a consent form at the start of the survey. Participants will only be able to access the questionnaire after confirming that they have read and understood the study information, met eligibility requirements and consent to participate.			
Confidentiality: Confidential information refers to information that can be related to an identifiable individual, whether living or deceased, which is not in the public domain and which is given with the expectation that it will be kept confidential. Under Common Law when an individual entrusts a researcher or research team with confidential information, the team must handle this in line with 'reasonable expectations'. In other words, confidential information should only normally be shared when there would be 'no surprises' for the individuals concerned. Where participants would not expect the researcher to be sharing their confidential information with others, researchers can manage their expectations by informing them of their intentions (e.g. in the participant information sheet or during discussions about participation) and asking them if they are happy with these plans. They should understand what is being proposed and what this might mean for them, before they decide whether the researcher can share their confidential information with others.				
Please detail how you will treat confidential information:				
12	All data will be collected anonymously online via password-protected Qualtrics software and treated confidentially. No directly identifiable information such as names, email addresses, IP addresses, telephone numbers or social media usernames will be collected. Participants will be told of the confidentiality agreement within the Information Sheet and consent form. Raw data will be stored securely on a password-protected University OneDrive and analysed using password-protected personal computer with SPSS software and will only be accessed by the student researcher and project supervisor when necessary. Findings will be reported as a whole after analysis and any quotations used from qualitative responses will be anonymised to ensure that individual participants			

	cannot be identified. Participants will also be instructed not to include personally identifiable information in their responses.			
Copies of any written consent form, written information and all other explanatory material should accompany this application. If you have included these then please list the documents included here.				
13	The participant information sheet and consent form attached will both be included at the start of the Qualtrics survey. Consent will be gained electronically using a single check box following consent statements to confirm participants have read and understood this information. PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET LINK – Information Sheet.pdf PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM LINK - Consent Form Final.pdf ALSO SEE AT END OF DOCUMENT			
14	Consent form attached?	YES ☒	NO ☐	N/A ☐

SECTION N: Research with Potential Military Application

1	Does your research have any potential military application?	YES	Click to continue to appendix 8	NO	Continue to the next section
2	Have you completed appendix 8?	YES	☐	NO	☒

SECTION O: Use of Artificial Intelligence Tools

Use of generative AI and other AI-based tools		YES	NO	N/A
There are a number of ethical issues relating to the use of generative AI and other AI-based tools, including data security, output bias, and output errors. In general you should assume that any generative AI or other AI-based tool that you pay to use is more secure and accurate than one which is free to use.				
Will the research use AI tools to do any of the following:				
1	Capture data?	☐	☒	☐
2	Generate and/or edit text?	☐	☒	☐
3	Generate graphics?	☐	☒	☐
4	Generate video?	☐	☒	☐
5	Generate sound/music?	☐	☒	☐
6	Generate code?	☐	☒	☐
7	Generate synthetic data?	☐	☒	☐
8	Analyse data?	☐	☒	☐
9	Analyse personal or sensitive data?	☐	☒	☐

10	Classify data?	☐	☒	☐
11	Do you intend to use the free version of any AI tools?	☐	☒	☐
If you have answered YES to any of questions O1-O11, please provide justification detailing why this is necessary for the research.				
12	(this box should expand as you type)			

Section P: Research Data Management Plan

1	Data Summary
The research will generate anonymous quantitative and qualitative data collected through an online survey on Qualtrics. Quantitative data will include responses to demographic questions (age, gender and country of residence) and psychometric measures assessing narrative immersion levels, fandom functions and emotion regulation preferences. Qualitative data will include written responses to open-ended questions exploring participants' experiences of engagement with fictional worlds. No directly identifiable personal data will be asked for or collected.	
2	Responsibilities
The researcher will be responsible for the management of all data, including data collection, storage, security, analysis and disposal in accordance with university policies and GDPR. The research supervisor will provide oversight and have access to the anonymised research data when necessary for supervisory purposes. No external organisations or partner institutions are involved.	
3	Assessment of existing data
N/A. This study will not use any existing datasets or previously collected participant data. All data will be generated specifically for this research project through an anonymous online survey.	
4	Management and curation of data
Data will be gathered, prepared and organised using Qualtrics and SPSS. Quantitative data will be exported from Qualtrics, checked for errors and cleaned before analysis by the researcher. Qualitative responses will be reviewed and anonymised where needed to remove any identifying information. Data files will be clearly labelled, securely stored and documented to ensure accurate analysis and access throughout the research project data analysis stage.	
5	Quality assurance of data
Data quality will be maintained using a structured online survey hosted on Qualtrics, reducing the risk of data entry errors. Responses will be reviewed for consistency following data collection. Any incomplete or invalid responses will be removed. Data will be checked during the cleaning process before analysis to ensure accuracy for the statistical and thematic analyses.	

6	Short-term data storage
Data will be collected and stored securely within Qualtrics and subsequently exported to a password-protected OneDrive account on a personal laptop for SPSS analysis. Access to the data will be kept to only the researcher and the research supervisor for supervisory purposes. No identifiable personal data will be collected. Regular backups will be maintained through University OneDrive to reduce the risk of data loss, and all data will be stored in accordance with UWTSD data protection and GDPR requirements.	
7	Long-term data storage and preservation
At the conclusion of the study, anonymised data will be retained securely for a minimum of 10 years following completion of the research, in accordance with UWTSD Research Data Management Policy. Data will be stored on a secure, password-protected university OneDrive and may be retained for dissertation assessment and potential publication. At the end of the retention period, data will be deleted from personal devices and cloud storage systems in accordance with university policies. Only anonymised data will be retained, and no directly identifiable information will be stored at any stage of the research.	
8	Documentation and metadata
Data files will be clearly organised by the researcher with accurate file naming. Documentation will be kept to describe datasets, variable names, coding procedures, and any data cleaning decisions made during the research process. Survey measures (ERQ, FFS), study materials (Information, consent & debrief sheets) and analysis files will also be kept ensuring that the research process is transparent and reproducible.	
9	Data sharing
The anonymised research data may be shared with the research supervisor and dissertation examiners for assessment and academic review. Findings from the study may be used for future academic presentations, showcase events and potential future publications. Data sharing restrictions are in place to protect participant anonymity, particularly in relation to qualitative responses. The dataset is not expected to require future updates and there are currently no plans to make the data publicly available or charge for access.	
10	Copyright and intellectual property ownership
Copyright and intellectual property rights for the research data created in this study will be owned in accordance with University of Wales Trinity Saint David policies and regulations. The researcher will generate and analyse data as part of the MSc dissertation under research supervision and any wider sharing of findings will acknowledge the researcher and the University. Intellectual property rights relating to the research data during this study will belong to the student researcher and data will be managed and retained in accordance with university regulations and ethical requirements.	
11	Resources
Resources required for this project includes access to Qualtrics for data collection, SPSS for data analysis and secure University OneDrive storage for research data. No additional costs are expected as these resources are provided by the University. Data storage requirements are minimal due to the relatively small	

expected size of the anonymised survey dataset and all storage and software needs will be met by existing University resources and the researcher's personal computer.

SECTION Q: Risk Assessment

Outline any anticipated risks that may adversely affect any of the participants, the researchers and/or the University, and the steps that will be taken to address them.

If you have completed a full risk assessment (for example as required by a laboratory, or external research collaborator) you may append that to this form.

1	Full risk assessment completed and appended?	YES ☐	NO ☒
Risks to participants, researchers, and the University			
2	Social risks: disclosures that could affect participants standing in the community, in their family and their job.	YES ☒	NO ☐
Risk: In the unlikely event of a data breach, information regarding fandom involvement and emotional regulation may be disclosed. Lifelong involvement with fandoms or self-reported "poor" emotional regulation may be potentially stigmatising and has a low risk of impacting participants social status.		How will you address any risks? UWTSO keeps all collected data securely and anonymously. As such, no breached data could be traced back to or identify any one individual participant. Additional mitigation and relevant information about this can be found in sub-sections Q5 & Q7 below.	
3	Legal risks: activities that could result in the participant, researchers and / or University committing an offence; activities that might lead to a participant disclosing criminal activity to a researcher which would necessitate reporting to enforcement authorities; activities that could result in a civil claim for compensation	YES ☐	NO ☒
Risk: (this box should expand as you type)		How will you address any risks?	
4	Economic harm: financial harm to participant, researcher and / or University through disclosure or other event.	YES ☐	NO ☒
Risk: (this box should expand as you type)		How will you address any risks?	
5	Reputational risk: damage to public perception of University or the University / researchers' reputation in the eyes of funders, the research community and / or the general public.	YES ☒	NO ☐
Risk: Although the study is anonymous, there is a small risk that unauthorised access to research data could result in participants' responses being disclosed. Some participants may regard information about their fandom engagement or emotional coping as private if confidentiality were breached. A data breach could also adversely affect the reputation of the researcher and the University.		How will you address any risks? The study will not collect any directly identifiable information such as names, email addresses, IP addresses or social media usernames. Data will be collected anonymously through Qualtrics and stored securely on password-protected University OneDrive systems and password-protected devices. Access to the data will be restricted to the researcher and research supervisor. Findings will be reported in aggregate form and any qualitative quotations used will be anonymised.	

6	Safeguarding risks: <i>Risk to young people, vulnerable adults and / or researcher from improper behaviour, abuse or exploitation. Risk to researcher of being in a comprising situation, in which there might be accusations of improper behaviour.</i>	YES ☐	NO ☒
Risk: <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		How will you address any risks?	
7	Sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics. <i>If research activity may include sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics or issues likely to disclose information requiring further action (e.g. criminal activity), give details of the procedures to deal with these issues, including any support/advice (e.g. helpline numbers) to be offered to participants. Note that where applicable, consent procedures should make it clear that if something potentially or actually illegal is discovered in the course of a project, it may need to be disclosed to the proper authorities.</i>	YES ☒	NO ☐
Risk: Some participants may experience mild discomfort when answering questions about emotional experiences, coping strategies or personally meaningful engagement with fictional worlds. Some participants may also consider parts of their fandom involvement to be private or potentially embarrassing. In the unlikely event of a data security breach, disclosure of such information could cause distress.			
How will you address any risks? Participants will be informed about the nature of the study before providing consent and will be reminded that participation is voluntary. They may skip any questions they do not wish to answer and may withdraw from the study at any time before submitting. No directly identifiable information will be collected, and data will be stored securely in accordance with university data protection requirements. A debrief sheet will be provided at the end of the study, including signposting to appropriate online support services should participation raise any concerns or emotional discomfort.			
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			
Health and safety risks			
8	Location hazards: <i>for example: fire; visiting or working in participant's homes; working in remote locations and in high crime areas; overseas travel; hot, cold or extreme weather conditions; working on or by water. Also hazardous work locations, such as construction sites, confined spaces, roofs or laboratories. For overseas travel, researchers will need to check country / city specific information, travel health requirements and consider emergency arrangements as part of their research planning. In all cases the University's International Travel Policy must be followed.</i>	YES ☐	NO ☒
Risk: <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		How will you address any risks?	
9	Activity hazards: <i>for example: potentially mentally harmful activities; distressing and stressful work and content; driving; tripping, or slipping; falling from height; physically demanding work; lifting, carrying, pushing and pulling loads; night time and weekend working.</i>	YES ☐	NO ☒
Risk: <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		How will you address any risks?	
10	Machinery and equipment: <i>for example: ergonomic hazards, including computer workstations and equipment; contact with electricity; contact with moving, rotating,</i>	YES ☐	NO ☒

	<i>ejecting or cutting parts in machinery and instruments; accidental release of energy from machines and instruments.</i>		
Risk: <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		How will you address any risks?	
11	Chemicals and other hazardous substances: the use, production, storage, waste, transportation and accidental release of chemicals and hazardous substances; flammable, dangerous and explosive substances; asphyxiating gases; allergens; biological agents, blood and blood products.	YES ☐	NO ☒
Risk: <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		How will you address any risks?	
12	Physical agents: for example: excessive noise exposure, hand-arm vibration and whole body vibration; ionising radiation; lasers; artificial optical radiation and electromagnetic fields	YES ☐	NO ☒
Risk: <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		How will you address any risks?	
13	Environmental risks: for example: accidental spillage of pollutants, damage to local ecosystems	YES ☐	NO ☒
Risk: <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		How will you address any risks?	

SECTION R: Disclosure and Barring Service

Disclosure and Barring Service				
1	If the research activity involves children or vulnerable adults, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate must be obtained before any contact with such participants.	YES	NO	N/A
	Does your research require you to hold a current DBS Certificate?	☐	☒	☐
2	If YES, please give the certificate number. If the certificate number is not available please write "Pending"; in this case any ethical approval will be subject to providing the appropriate certificate number.			

SECTION S: Declaration

The information which I have provided is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have attempted to identify any risks and issues related to the research activity and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants. In submitting this application I hereby confirm that I undertake to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Policy which is published on the website: https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/research/research-ethics/		
1	Name of applicant	Aaron Young

2	Electronic or written signature of applicant:	
3	Date	12/06/2026
4	Name of Director of Studies	
5	Electronic or written signature of Director of Studies:	
6	Date	

Checklist: Please complete the checklist below to ensure that you have completed the form according to the guidelines and attached any required documentation:

1	☒	I have read the guidance notes supplied before completing the form.
2	☒	I have completed all relevant sections of the form in full.
3	☒	I have attached a copy of the Participant Information Sheet (PIS) or Consent Form
4	☐	I have attached a completed copy of the Trusted Research and Innovation Checklist (where applicable) Fhtt
5	☐	I have attached a full risk assessment (where appropriate)
6	☒	I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice
7	☒	I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Data Management Policy
8	☒	I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Export Control Policy
9	☒	I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Open Access Research Policy
10	I have completed the following appendices:	1 ☐
		2 ☐
		3 ☐
		4 ☐
		5 ☐
		6 ☐
		7 ☐
		8 ☐

All communications relating to this application during its processing must be in writing and emailed to pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk, with the title 'Ethical Approval' followed by your name.

APPENDIX 1 – Grant or Contract Funding

A1.1	Has your research been awarded external funding?	YES	☐	NO	☐
A1.2	Have you applied for funding / awaiting decision?	YES	☐	NO	☐
A1.3	Are you intending to apply for funding?	YES	☐	NO	☐
A1.4	Funding Body				
A1.5	Lead institution (grant holder)				
A1.6	If awarded, grant reference				
A1.7	If awarded, grant value				
A1.8	If awarded, start date and duration				

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main form](#)

APPENDIX 2: External Collaborative Research Activity

INSTITUTION 1				
A2.1	Name			
A2.2	Researcher name and position			
A2.3	Role in project (e.g. co-investigator)			
A2.4	Contact e-mail address			
A2.5	External Ethical Approval <i>Please detail the ethical approval required and arrangements for this partner. See Section 14 of the UWTSD Research Ethics and Integrity Policy. If approved, please supply confirmation.</i>	Obtained?	YES	NO
			☐	☐

INSTITUTION 2				
A2.6	Name			
A2.7	Researcher name and position			
A2.8	Role in project (e.g. co-investigator)			
A2.9	Contact e-mail address			
A2.10	External Ethical Approval <i>Please detail the ethical approval required and arrangements for this partner. See Section 14 of the UWTSD Research Ethics and Integrity Policy. If approved, please supply confirmation.</i>	Obtained?	YES	NO
			☐	☐

INSTITUTION 3				
A2.11	Name			
A2.12	Researcher name and position			
A2.13	Role in project (e.g. co-investigator)			
A2.14	Contact e-mail address			
A2.15	External Ethical Approval <i>Please detail the ethical approval required and arrangements for this partner. See Section 14 of the UWTSD Research Ethics and Integrity Policy. If approved, please supply confirmation.</i>	Obtained?	YES	NO
			☐	☐

Add additional collaborators as needed

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APPENDIX 3: Research Undertaken Outside of the UK

A3.1	Research activity outside of the UK If research activity will take place overseas, you are responsible for ensuring that local ethical considerations are complied with and that the relevant permissions are sought. Specify any local guidelines (e.g. from local professional associations/learned societies/universities) that exist and whether these involve any ethical stipulations beyond those usual in the UK (provide details of any licenses or permissions required). Also specify whether there are any specific ethical issues raised by the local context in which the research activity is taking place, for example, particular cultural and/or legal sensitivities or vulnerabilities of participants. Describe the measures you have taken to comply with these and provide evidence of approvals etc. If you live in the country where you will do the research then please state this. If you have a local research supervisor or research advisor then please give their contact details here.
(this box should expand as you type)	
A3.2	Responsible Research and Innovation If research is taking place overseas please refer to the UWTSD Trusted Research and Innovation Policy and complete the Trusted Research and Innovation Checklist and submit it with this form.
A3.3	Confirm that you have read the Trusted Research and Innovation Policy ☐

If you are a postgraduate research student working with a research supervisor or research advisor at your local university then you do not need to fill in any more sections of this appendix.

If you are working in a research collaboration with an overseas partner please complete the remaining sections of this appendix.

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Organisational Details	
A3.4	Name of Organisation
A3.5	Country where organisation is based:
A3.6	Registration number and name of registration body (examples of relevant registration bodies are government, tax, corporation, charity, educational authority):
(this box should expand as you type)	
A3.7	What is the legal status of the organisation? (for example: public university, private university, charity, private company, non-profit making company, government research organisation, independent research organisation) Please include the date of foundation. Note: We may be required to ask for evidence of this at a later stage.
(this box should expand as you type)	
A3.8	Is your organisation affiliated to any other organisation? (i.e. is the organisation legally part of a larger organisation or a group of larger organisations).

<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	
A3.9	Name(s) of investigators in the organisation who will be responsible for the collaborative research and innovation
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	

About New Partners			
A3.10	Why does a partner want to work with you?		
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			
A3.11	What are they expecting in return for their financial support or involvement?		
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			
A3.12	Is the organisation associated with a country which may be viewed as hostile to the UK or one which has different democratic and ethical values from our own? If you have ticked YES, please briefly describe below how you will maintain the UK's democratic and ethical values within the research.	YES	NO
		☐	☐
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			
A3.13	Has due diligence into the partner identified any involvement in research on behalf of the military or police with links to a hostile state? If you have ticked YES, please summarise below how you will prevent information from this research from being released to these organisations.	YES	NO
		☐	☐
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			
A3.14	Set within the context of any information gained from due diligence, could your research be misused or have unintended applications which would be negative? If you have ticked YES, please summarise below how this might occur.	YES	NO
		☐	☐
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			
A3.15	Are there any legal, regulatory or university policy constraints on undertaking your research with this partner? If you have ticked YES, please summarise these below.	YES	NO
		☐	☐
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			
A3.16		YES	NO

	Having considered the answers to questions A3.10-A3.15, are there potential reputational or ethical risks to you or the university? If you have ticked YES, please summarise these risks below.	☐	☐
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			

About Research Relationships		YES	NO
A3.17	Are the terms of any proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in keeping with the expectations of your department and university?	☐	☐
A3.18	Are you providing existing intellectual property (IP), research data, confidential or personally identifiable data to the project? If so, how is this going to be protected?	☐	☐
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			
A3.19	Who will own any IP that is generated?		
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			
A3.20	What plans do you have in place for protecting the resulting IP?		
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			
A3.21	What contractual requirements are you able to put in place to protect the interests of your academic institutions?		
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			
A3.22	What access will the research partner have to your IT network? If they do have access, what broader visibility might this provide?		
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			
A3.23	Is there any physical separation or protection required between research in similar fields?		
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			

About Existing Partners			
A3.24	Would proceeding with the research raise potential conflicts of interest with existing research partners? If you have ticked YES, please explain these conflicts below.	YES	NO
		☐	☒

<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			
A3.25	Have you spoken with your existing partners about any potential conflict of interest? If you have ticked YES, please briefly summarise their response(s) below.	YES	NO
		☐	☒
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			
A3.26	Does any non-disclosure agreement for this project include an expectation that you will need to provide visibility to existing partners? If you have ticked YES, please explain below how this will be managed.	YES	NO
		☐	☒
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			
A3.27	Will this research breach any existing contractual agreements that you, your department or university already have? If you have ticked YES, please explain below how this will be managed.	YES	NO
		☐	☒
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			

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APPENDIX 4: Research with Vulnerable People

Will the research involve data processing involving the following data subjects:		YES	NO
A4.1	Children under 16	☐	☒
A4.2	Adults with learning disabilities	☐	☒
A4.3	Adults with other forms of mental incapacity or mental illness	☐	☒
A4.4	Adults in emergency situations	☐	☒
A4.5	Prisoners or young offenders	☐	☒
A4.6	Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator, e.g. members of staff, students	☐	☒
A4.7	People who have not given their explicit consent to participate in the project	☐	☒
A4.8	People engaged in illegal activities	☐	☒
A4.9	Any other people who can be considered vulnerable in the context of this project	☐	☒
Please justify the inclusion of the above people (if applicable), explaining why the research cannot be conducted on non-vulnerable people.			
A4.10	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
Please give details of extra steps taken to assure the protection of vulnerable people participating in the research. You should describe any arrangements to be made for obtaining consent from a legal representative.			
A4.11	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
It is the researcher's responsibility to check whether a DBS check (or equivalent) is required and to obtain one if it is needed. Please confirm:			
A4.12	DBS Check required?	YES	NO
		☐	☒
A4.13	DBS certificate obtained?	YES	NO
		☐	☒

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APPENDIX 5: Research Involving Animals

The use of animals in research is tightly governed and monitored by law and by the Home Office, specifically under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 and its accompanying codes of practice and processes. The Act regulates procedures that are carried out on protected animals for scientific or educational purposes that may cause pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm. Under the Act, a protected animal is 'any living vertebrate, other than man, and any living cephalopod'. The University does not hold a Home Office issued Establishment Licence and therefore researchers must ensure that any proposed work involving animals is either exempt from the Act or falls outside of its scope. Exempted research, for example involving routine veterinary practice or clinical veterinary research, may still require external ethical approval from the Royal Society of Veterinary Surgeons. When undertaking collaborative research involving animals, the UWTSD Research Ethics Committee must be assured that the partner institution(s) conform to the appropriate regulatory framework or legislation, and have approval from their local Research Ethics Committee. Any such work must follow the guidance of the National Centre for the Replacement, Reduction and Refinement of Animals in Research, known as the 3Rs. In all cases, advice must be sought from INSPIRE for any proposed research involving animals, either at UWTSD, or by research collaborators in partnership with UWTSD. This should be at the very early stages of research design, so that an appropriate due diligence exercise can be undertaken.

Will the research involve any work with any of the following animals (including observation in their natural habitat)		YES	NO
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A5.1	Any living vertebrates, other than humans?	☐	☒
A5.2	Any living cephalopods?	☐	☒
A5.3	Has INSPIRE undertaken an initial due diligence exercise?	☐	☒
A5.4	Due diligence assessment appended to this application?	☐	☒

Please provide a summary of the due diligence exercise, noting arrangements for compliance with the necessary regulatory frameworks and legislation. Please append the full due diligence assessment from INSPIRE.

A5.5	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
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APPENDIX 6: Research with Staff or Offenders in Prison Establishments and Probation Services

Research with staff and/or offenders in prison establishments, the Probation Service or within His Majesty's Prison and Probation Services requires additional approvals.			
Will the research involve any of the following?		YES	NO
A6.1	Staff in prison establishments	☐	☒
A6.2	Offenders in prison establishments	☐	☒
A6.3	The Probation Service	☐	☒
A6.4	His Majesty's Prison and Probation Services	☐	☒
All researchers wanting to conduct research with staff and/or offenders in prison establishments, the Probation Service regions or within HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) Headquarters are required to formally apply for research approval to the HMPPS National Research Committee (NRC). Before doing so, INSPIRE must undertake an initial due diligence exercise. If you have not contacted INSPIRE, please do so immediately. If YES to any of the above, please confirm:			
A6.5	Has INSPIRE undertaken an initial due diligence exercise?	☐	☒
A6.6	Have you applied to the HMPPS National Research Committee (NRC)?	☐	☒
A6.7	Has HMPPS National Research Committee approval been granted? If yes, please append to this application.	☐	☒
A6.8	Due diligence assessment appended to this application?	☐	☒
Please provide a summary of the due diligence exercise, noting arrangements for compliance with the necessary regulatory frameworks and legislation. Please append the full due diligence assessment from INSPIRE.			
A6.9	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		

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APPENDIX 7: Health and Social Care Research

All health and social care research must have a sponsor as defined by the Health Research Authority UK Policy Framework for Health & Social Care. The University will under no circumstances act as the sponsor of health and social care research (i.e. that which requires approval by a NHS Research Ethics Committee). In all cases, therefore, an appropriate collaborating partner must lead the research. Any health and social care research therefore requires an initial due diligence exercise, which will be undertaken by INSPIRE. The purpose of the due diligence exercise is to ensure that the University has the capability to undertake the research, either independently or in collaboration with research partners. This will include advice on suitable collaborative arrangements and the appropriate involvement of UWTSD researchers in the proposed research study. This is likely to apply to the following areas:

Will the data processing involve:		YES	NO
A7.1	Participants who have been recruited on the basis of medical and health conditions, life stage or other physical or mental attribute.	☐	☒
A7.2	Participants who will engage in physical exercise, activity or exertion of any kind, or who use exercise equipment, assistive devices or other apparatus for the purposes of the research study. This includes interventions that are minimally invasive.	☐	☒
A7.3	Patients and users of the NHS (including NHS patients treated in the private sector).	☐	☒
A7.4	Individuals identified as potential participants because of their status as relatives or carers of patients and users of the NHS.	☐	☒
A7.5	Patients who are cared for in private and voluntary sector nursing homes.	☐	☒
A7.6	Confidential patient information.	☐	☒
A7.7	Clinical trial of a medicinal product or medical device.	☐	☒
A7.8	Access to organs or other bodily material of past and present NHS patients, or any material consisting of or containing human cells.	☐	☒
A7.9	Use of human tissue (including non-NHS sources) where the collection is not covered by a Human Tissue Authority licence.	☐	☒
A7.10	Foetal material and IVF involving NHS patients.	☐	☒
A7.11	The recently deceased under NHS care.	☐	☒
A7.12	NHS staff or premises.	☐	☒
A7.13	Practising midwives conducting a clinical trial.	☐	☒
A7.14	Investigational medicinal product.	☐	☒
A7.15	Medical devices that are not CE-marked or CE-marked medical devices that have been modified or are being used for a new purpose.	☐	☒
A7.16	Exposure to ionising radiation.	☐	☒
A7.17	Other health and social care related research.	☐	☒
Please specify		☐	☒
(this box should expand as you type)			

Researchers proposing to work on projects involving health and social care research must check whether their study meets the HRA definition of research and whether it should undergo ethics review by a NHS Research Ethics Committee. If you have answered **YES** to any of questions A7.1-A7.17 then this is likely

A7.18	Does the research meet the HRA definition of research?	YES	NO	N/A
		☐	☐	☐
A7.19	Is the Research being sponsored by a collaborating partner?	YES	NO	N/A
		☐	☐	☐
A7.20	Has NHS ethics approval been granted?	YES	NO	N/A
		☐	☐	☐
A7.21	Has INSPIRE undertaken an initial due diligence exercise?	YES	NO	
		☐	☐	

NOTE: If you have not contacted INVERIZ, please do immediately.	
A7.22	(this box should expand as you type)

A7.23	Have you been granted NHS ethical approval?	YES	Click to continue to Section R	NO	Return to the main form
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APPENDIX 8: Export Control for Research with Potential Military End Uses

Export controls apply to the physical, electronic or oral transmission outside the UK of applied research, sensitive technology, software and equipment that could potentially be misused, either directly or indirectly, for military purposes. These legal controls are a serious obligation and UWTSD researchers must actively manage the risks of these being misused to fuel conflict, threaten national security, support terrorism and crime, violate human rights or proliferate Weapons of Mass Destruction. UWTSD's Export Control Policy provides a clear six step process to determine if your research is covered by export controls. Please complete the following screening to judge if you need to complete a full export control assessment. If you are in any doubt, then please contact INSPIRE. Any research in UWTSD involving the following high-risk areas must be screened.

Will the research involve:

Defence		YES	NO
A8.1	Military equipment and munitions	☐	☒
A8.2	Defence equipment, including satellites	☐	☒
A8.3	Technical data, including some border and port information	☐	☒
A8.4	Dual use research	☐	☒
Materials and Technologies		YES	NO
A8.5	Nuclear materials, facilities and equipment	☐	☒
A8.6	Chemicals, microorganisms and toxins	☐	☒
A8.7	Electronics design, development and production	☐	☒
A8.8	Computers	☐	☒
A8.9	Telecommunications	☐	☒
A8.10	Sensors and lasers	☐	☒
A8.11	Navigation and avionics	☐	☒
A8.12	Marine technology	☐	☒
A8.13	Composite materials	☐	☒
A8.14	Aerospace and propulsion	☐	☒
Sensitive Information		YES	NO
A8.15	Cryptology	☐	☒
A8.16	Counterterrorism	☐	☒
A8.17	Counternarcotics	☐	☒
A8.18	Cyber-related	☐	☒
A8.19	Non-proliferation	☐	☒
A8.20	Transnational criminal organisations	☐	☒

Genetic Resources		YES	NO
A8.21	Genetic material of actual or potential value	☐	☒
A8.22	Organisms, or parts thereof	☐	☒
A8.23	Populations (or organisms)	☐	☒
A8.24	Other biotic components of ecosystems	☐	☒
A8.25	Domesticated or cultivated species in which the evolutionary process has been influenced by humans	☐	☒

Will you be exporting military or dual-use technology, now or possibly in the future? This information may take many forms, including:		YES	NO
A8.26	Physical transfer of goods, technologies, material or equipment	☐	☒
A8.27	Blueprints	☐	☒
A8.28	Plans	☐	☒
A8.29	Diagrams	☐	☒
A8.30	Models	☐	☒
A8.31	Formulae	☐	☒
A8.32	Tables	☐	☒
A8.33	Engineering designs and specifications	☐	☒
A8.34	Manuals and instructions	☐	☒
A8.35	Software	☐	☒
A8.36	Know-how	☐	☒

Will your project transfer technology using any of the following physical methods?		YES	NO
A8.37	USB flash drives	☐	☒
A8.38	Portable hard drives	☐	☒
A8.39	Laptops	☐	☒
A8.40	Tablets	☐	☒
A8.41	Intangible forms by using electronic media, such as email, phone storage and cloud file sharing	☐	☒
A8.42	Physical exports	☐	☒

Will your project involve any of the following?		YES	NO
A8.43	Oral transfer by phone or videoconferencing or presentations	☐	☒
A8.44	Travelling overseas for any purpose, while unintentionally carrying any of the above.	☐	☒
A8.45	Will you be hosting foreign visitors?	☐	☒

If you answer YES to any of questions A8,1-A8.45 then you should complete a full export control assessment and append that to this application. Before doing this please contact INSPIRE who will advise further.		YES	NO
A8.46	Full export control assessment required?	☐	☐
A8.47	Full export control assessment completed?	☐	☐
A8.48	Full export control assessment appended?	☐	☐

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Participant Information Sheet

The title of the research project

A WORLD OF THEIR OWN: Exploring Narrative Immersion, Fandoms and Emotional Regulation Through Fictional Worlds

Invitation to take part

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether you wish to take part.

Who is organising/funding the research?

This research is organised by an MSc student at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD) under academic supervision for a dissertation assessment. This research is not directly funded.

Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This project has been ethically approved by the UWTSD Research Ethics Committee.

What is the purpose of the project?

This research is being conducted as part of an MSc in Applied Psychology at UWTSD. The study aims to explore how adults engage with fictional worlds and fandom communities, and the different ways people experience this engagement.

Many people spend time reading books, watching films and television series, playing video games, or participating in online fan communities involving large-scale fictional worlds and franchises. While these activities are a common part of our everyday life, researchers are still developing an understanding of the experiences and motivations associated with engagement in fictional worlds.

By completing this survey, you will help researchers better understand how people interact with fictional media and fandoms, and what role these experiences may play in our lives. The findings will contribute to psychological research on media engagement and fandom and may help inform future research in this area. The study is for research purposes only and is not designed to assess or diagnose any individual participant.

Why have I been chosen?

If you have seen the advert for this research study, you have likely been identified as a key participant due to your association with online fictional fandom communities (Such as Reddit or Discord). This means that you are part of the demographic that would be of great interest to this study's aims. We aim to recruit 200-300 participants from online fan communities to achieve a diverse, global sample. All participants in this investigation must be 18 years or older and be able to read English.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to sign a participant agreement form and read this information page, as we want you to understand what participation involves, before you make a decision on whether to participate. If you or any family member has an ongoing relationship with UWTSD or the research team, e.g. as a member of staff, as a student or other service user, your decision on whether to take part (or continue to take part) will not affect this relationship in any way.

Can I change my mind about taking part?

Yes, you can stop participating in study activities at any time, without giving a reason, by closing your browser tab. Please note that withdrawal of data and responses will not be possible after submission, as all data is immediately anonymised and individual participants' responses cannot be identified.

If I change my mind, what happens to my information?

After you decide to withdraw from the study, we will not collect any further information from or about you. As regards information we have already collected before this point, your rights to access, change or move that information are limited. This is because we need to manage your information in specific ways to ensure the research is reliable and accurate. Further explanation about this is in the Personal Information section below. Incomplete Qualtrics responses will be removed by the researcher and will not form part of the final dataset.

What would taking part involve?

If you decide to take part, you will be asked to complete an online questionnaire hosted on Qualtrics. After reading this information page and providing electronic consent, the survey will begin with a small number of demographic questions, including your age, gender, and country of residence, as well as identifying your chosen fictional "world".

Next, you will be asked to answer a series of short questionnaires about your engagement with fictional worlds and fandoms. Two of these questionnaires will focus on your experiences of engaging with your favourite fictional media franchises and worlds, such as books, films, television series, video games, and related fandom activities, specifically your levels of narrative immersion into your world and the reasons you engage with wider fandoms. You will also be asked to complete a third questionnaire about your thoughts, feelings, and everyday experiences managing emotions for the study's ultimate aim (more information about this will be available at the conclusion of the study).

In addition, the survey will include a small number of optional open-ended questions where you may choose to describe your experiences in your own words. This will give you an opportunity to explain subjectively what engagement with your chosen fictional world means to you emotionally and include any thoughts that would bring overall context to the questionnaire findings.

Participation is entirely voluntary. You may skip any question you do not wish to answer and may stop the survey at any time before submitting your responses. The full survey is expected to take approximately 15–20 minutes to complete.

What are the advantages and possible disadvantages or risks of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits nor risks to you participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will inform and inspire future research on fandom engagement, narrative psychology and their relevance to our emotional experiences. As the phenomenon of multi-media franchises, binge watching and engaging with wider fictional lore, stories and characters becomes increasingly popular, it is important to understand why this type of media engagement is emotionally meaningful and stimulating.

Whilst we do not anticipate any risks to you in taking part in this study, you may experience mild discomfort in disclosing emotional experiences as part of this questionnaire. However, these questions have been taken from a popular and validated psychometric measure.

What type of information will be sought from me, and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research project's objectives?

The survey will collect basic demographic information, including your age, gender, and country of residence, as well as asking you to complete three established psychological questionnaires. These questionnaires will involve you answering validated items exploring your depth of immersion into your

chosen narrative world, the reasons you engage with related fandom communities and what this type of engagement means to you emotionally. You may also provide optional written responses to open-ended questions about your experiences with your chosen fictional world.

This information is necessary to help the researchers understand patterns of engagement with fictional media and fandoms, and to explore how these experiences vary across individuals and influence our emotions. Collecting this information will allow the research questions to be investigated and contribute to a better understanding of engagement with fictional worlds from a psychological perspective.

How will my information be managed?

University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD) is the organisation with overall responsibility for this study and the Data Controller of your personal information, which means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it appropriately. Research is a task that we perform in the public interest, as part of our core function as a university.

Undertaking this research study involves collecting and/or generating information about you. We manage research data strictly in accordance with:

- Ethical requirements; and
- Current data protection laws.

These control use of information about identifiable individuals, but do not apply to anonymous research data: “anonymous” means that we have either removed or not collected any pieces of data or links to other data which identify a specific person as the subject or source of a research result. UWTSD’s Research Participant Privacy Notice sets out more information about how we fulfil our responsibilities as a data controller and about your rights as an individual under the data protection legislation. We ask you to read this Notice so that you can fully understand the basis on which we will process your personal information. Research data will be used only for the purposes of the study or related uses identified in the Privacy Notice or this Information Sheet. To safeguard your rights in relation to your personal information, we will use the minimum personally-identifiable information possible and control access to that data as described below.

Publication

You will not be able to be identified in any external reports or publications about the research without your specific consent. Otherwise, your information will only be included in these materials in an anonymous form, i.e. you will not be identifiable.

Research results may be published in research journals and academic output.

Security and access controls

UWTSD will hold the information we collect about you in hard copy in a secure location and on a UWTSD password-protected secure network, where held electronically.

Personal information which has not been anonymised will be accessed and used only by appropriate, authorised individuals and when this is necessary for the purposes of the research or another purpose identified in the Privacy Notice. This may include giving access to UWTSD staff or others responsible for monitoring and/or audit of the study, who need to ensure that the research complies with applicable regulations.

Further use of your information

The information collected about you may be used in an anonymous form to support other research projects in the future, and access to it in this form will not be restricted. It will not be possible for you to be identified from this data. To enable this use, anonymised data will be added to either UWTSD online Research Data Repository: this is a central location where data is stored, which is accessible to the public.

Keeping your information if you withdraw from the study

If you withdraw from active participation in the study, we will keep information which we have already collected from or about you, if this has ongoing relevance or value to the study. This may include your personal identifiable information. As explained above, your legal rights to access, change, delete or move this information are limited as we need to manage your information in specific ways in order for the research to be reliable and accurate. However, if you have concerns about how this will affect you personally, you can raise these with the research team when you withdraw from the study.

You can find out more about your rights in relation to your data and how to raise queries or complaints in our Privacy Notice.

Retention of research data

Project governance documentation, including copies of participant agreements: we keep this documentation for a long period after completion of the research, so that we have records of how we conducted the research and who took part. The only personal information in this documentation will be your age, gender and country of residence, and we will not be able to link this to any anonymised research results.

Research results:

As described above, during the course of the study, we will anonymise the information we have collected about you as an individual. This means that we will not hold your personal information in identifiable form after we have completed the research activities.

You can find more specific information about retention periods for personal information in our Privacy Notice. We keep anonymised research data indefinitely, so that it can be used for other research as described above.

Contact for further information

If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact the lead researcher, Aaron Young, at 2205141@student.uwtsd.ac.uk or the academic supervisor at paul.hutchings@uwtsd.ac.uk

In case of complaints

Any concerns about the study should be directed to the University's Data Protection Officer by email at: foi@uwtsd.ac.uk

Electronic Consent Form Statements

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the Information Sheet for the above study.
2. I confirm that I am over 18 years old
3. I confirm that I can read and understand English
4. I understand that my participation is voluntary, and I am free to withdraw at any time during the study without penalty or giving any reason.
5. I understand that I may contact the research team for further information.
6. I understand that my fully anonymised data will be utilised only for this research study, which is being conducted by an MSc Applied Psychology student for their postgraduate research project, and will be deleted once external examiner approval for the project has been obtained.
7. I have been informed that if I feel I would be uncomfortable answering personal questions or completing a questionnaire relating to narrative immersion, fandom functions or emotional regulation, that I should not take part in this study.
8. I understand that I may decline to answer any questions.
9. I understand that any data collected will be anonymised and stored in an anonymous format and it will not be possible to trace the data back to me to withdraw.
10. I understand that the anonymised data provided will be securely stored and accessible only to the members of the research team directly involved in the study, and that confidentiality will be maintained.
11. I agree to take part in the study.

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