THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION SYSTEMS

PROJECT TITLE: Community negotiated game rules in popular computer game modifications (mods)
INVESTIGATORS Mitchell Harrop, Martin Gibbs

The aim of this project is understand the nature of rules (both programmed and socially negotiated) in playing the game Defense of the Ancients (DotA). The project also aims to understand how these rules interact with the ongoing design process of DotA and hence learn important lessons for game designers in general. This study is part of research undertaken for completion of the Master of Philosophy degree.

To study the rules people play by in DotA we need you to engage in a few research related activities for us. First, we will ask you to allow us to interview you about your general game playing background, history playing DotA, current thoughts on DotA and any involvement you may have had with the development process. After an optional fifteen minute break, we will then ask you to allow us to observe one of your normal sessions of play. The interview should take about an hour and the observation session approximately one hour depending on the length of the game played. The full process may be tape recorded for later analysis. These activities can occur at a time and place of your own choosing but preferably be done in the location you normally play the game. Secondly, we would like you to provide us with copies of game recordings which illustrate the topics discussed during the interview. Finally, we will ask to be allowed to send follow-up clarification questions via email if required. These questions should take less than 15 minutes to answer.

The project involves extremely minimal risk. The only anticipated inconvenience for you is the time taken by the interview, the play observation session and the time to reply to a follow up email. The information and game recordings you provide will be treated as confidential and used for only research purposes connected with this research project. Confidentiality of the information will be protected, subject to any legal limitations. Access to the information will be restricted to the investigators named above. As required by the University, data will be held in locked cabinets in the Department of Information Systems, and destroyed using confidential waste disposal techniques after five years following the last publication from the research. No individual person or organization will be identifiable in the research report written up about this research. However, due to the small number of participants in this research project, even though people or player names will not be used, there is a possible risk that individuals could be identified by contextual information.

Your participation in the research project is voluntary, and you may discontinue your involvement at any time. You may also withdraw any unprocessed data previously provided.

If you have any questions about this research please contact Mitchell Harrop on (03) 8344 1556 or moharrop@pgrad.unimelb.edu.au.

This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics, Committee The University of Melbourne (project number: 0931989.1). If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of this research please contact the Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics, The University of Melbourne, VIC 3010 ph: (03) 8344 7507 fax: (03) 9347 6739.