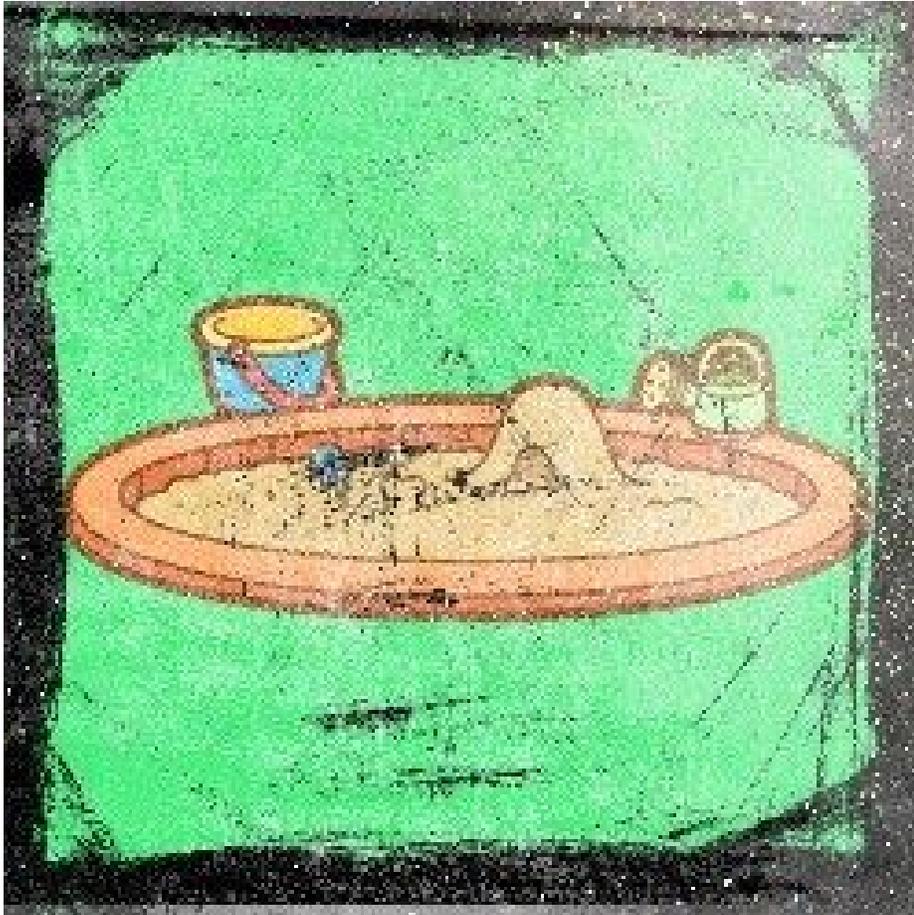


Survival in Minecraft and in Quarantine



Introduction:

Yono: Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia is a 631 acre campus, rife with eye-catching architecture, pretty green fields, and unique archways that all contribute to what can only be described as a beautiful campus. Perhaps this is sounding like one of those desperate college pamphlets you received as a high school senior. Emory University, though, can also be found via Minecraft. A particular IP Address takes you to a world where you can explore Emory and all of its halls, classrooms, dorms, parks, and even trees

down to the leaves. And Emory isn't the only school either. Similar Minecraft simulations also exist for many other colleges across the nation, all building projects that take thousands of hours to complete. So why do people burden themselves so much? Isn't this just menial labor with no end? Let's back up.

Marcus Persson, also known as Notch, released what he initially called "Cave Game" back in 2009. This was released on the PC and was attractive to people who liked to code and design gaming worlds. It was more of a source tool than a game for most people at that point, and users could go in and create what they wanted using the basic blocks that had been set up by Persson.

Once this small project started to take off, the creator released it in an updated format as a shadow of the Minecraft we know and love today. What made the game so unique is that it was also a resource management simulation. It allowed players to gather the resources they needed to create, so the creations meant more to them since they had to build them with parts they had collected on their own.

Minecraft is a game that evades a true description, so that question is very hard to answer. It dips into every genre, but at its most basic form, Minecraft is a sandbox game. What is that, you ask? A sandbox game is named after exactly that: a sandbox, where kids have no limitations on what they make - as is Minecraft a game in which there are very little constraints on what a player is able to do. But starting up a world, most start up a

survival world which is where the player gathers resources from the world around them, exploring and uncovering more powerful gear as they venture deeper and farther around the world. In survival, there is an achievements system that explains how to get to the

Yono: Today, 126 million people playing each month, and over 200 million copies have been sold since the game's inception. The game can be enjoyed in a wide variety of ways, ranging from youtube videos, to server games, to building an entire city in your own creative server.

Furthermore, Minecraft has had a huge surge during quarantine. People flocked back to a game that was more than a decade old, so what made people come back to play Minecraft of all games? Was survival in the real world not exciting enough?

But now, to the original question, what makes Minecraft's essential games: survival and creative, so enjoyable?

Ultimately, I think its safe to say that Minecraft's joy is that it offers a way for one to escape into their own world where the possibilities are endless and their creation is unbound by anything other than imagination. Let's get into it:

Someone else: Let's start with survival. Why is this enjoyable? There's almost an entire genre of horror and action movies dedicated to survival against all odds in nature, but today, for \$30, you can spend hours

experiencing that scenario virtually. Also, monsters are real here. Why has this brought Mojang millions of dollars?

Yono: In my perspective, I think Minecraft at its core encourages thinking outside the box. The world, being randomly generated, offers so many opportunities to try out new things and sometimes fail - which to me is a very important part of the game. Some of the things that kept Minecraft 'grounded' for me were, and pun not intended here, fall damage, beds in the nether, and Creepers. If, when playing survival, there weren't obstacles that simulated the reality of failure, I don't think it would be very much fun. Moreover, these little signs of failure as you probe the game almost simulate a conversation you're having with the game itself. This sounds super weird, but sometimes it feels like when I play Minecraft, I'm getting in-game 'feedback': for example, if I were to try to sleep in the nether, I would explode and die. The developers might've added this a little heads-up joke, but to me, after my first self-detonation, it felt as though the game was telling me "this right here - it doesn't work." And when the game tells you what doesn't work, it sucks, especially if you really thought it would, but it just makes it all the better when you actually try something and succeed, kind of like the idea of economic scarcity - to have value, something can't be in infinite quantity. To me, the trial-and-error in creative endeavors what makes minecraft survival so fun.

Someone else: *respond to probing*

discussion about how Minecraft builds problem solving and learning and how Minecraft builds on probing and telescoping - should take roughly 2-3 mins so each person talks twice (1 time long piece, 1 time shorter piece. Improv is great here since it will be a conversation.)

So, now that we've cleared up what makes Minecraft survival fun, let's address the elephant in the room, what makes creative fun? Who just builds an entire college campus virtually?

Andrew Perspective: I remember first hearing about minecraft after watching my friend play it on his Ipad. I was amazed with the scope and enormity of the world, and the creativity one can put in it. He was making a mansion, and all I could think about was getting home, getting the game, and making my own. My main experiences with minecraft were in creative mode. Every day I would think of different things to make, castles, hotels, mansions, tree houses, and bridges. I found a lot of joy in individually decorating every room. Every day I could log on and build something new, testing my creativity. One could think of what I was doing as simply work. Placing blocks, counting the dimensions of your structure, spending hours placing objects in rooms. Why was this considered fun? What was fun is being able to see the product of your work. To be able to build complex structures without the challenges it poses in real life. Jamie Madigan, a psychology Ph.D says: "Where real-life work fails — lack of timely feedback, insurmountable challenge and interpersonal conflict — games shine. Games

allow one to do work one can't in real life, in a setting and environment that make it engaging and fun. (Add Bogost argument) This was a big part of my childhood growing up, and definitely impacted the way I am today.

My quarantine started by ending my senior year of high school, returning me back to a time in which I had no academic obligations, no work, or stressors leading me to relapse into an old habit: watching Minecraft YouTubers. Minecraft has the beauty of having a community of players who make content from almost every way to play the game. There are speedrunners, creators who share their amazing maps and creations in creative mode, those who showcase their programming and engineering skill by using the game's more technical options to bend the limits of what the game could do - whether its making a functional 8-bit computer that works in game, or tying in external software to make a phone that can make video calls real in real life - and there are those who play competitively to fight against other players, called PvPers all contributing to the community by making content about the game. The fact that so many people have such a passion to become amazing at a specific way to play Minecraft really shows just how much success in the game is only defined by the player. This community is also filled with the most wholesome people, and players really feel like they belong to a group of nice, kind people who found Minecraft to be something more than just a block game with primitive graphics. So, returning to the game and watching Minecraft content creators was the

perfect way for me to keep my time in quarantine well spent. It was a game that never added stress to quarantine me, and one in which I could explore and interact with my world and other players in ways that were cut off because of the pandemic.

Ultimately, we think Minecraft is fun because of the decisions you get to make, and the freedom you are allowed. No other game gives you so much freedom and almost 'trust', which explains why in uncertain times, a lot of people fell back on Minecraft when they experienced their Longest Rainy Sunday.