Introduction

Craft Museum is a Minecraft server that stemmed out of a PhD impact project, funded by the Horizon Centre for Doctoral Training, University of Nottingham. The server itself serves as a means of communicating what Minecraft players are capable of creating through the game. On top of that, it provides an overview of the various steps that are involved in constructing a Minecraft build. The aim is to give potential visitors an idea of how professional builders produce high quality contraptions inside the game. Furthermore, we hope to inspire upcoming builders and motivate them to improve their building skills.

To access the server, please use the following IP in Minecraft.

play.craftmuseum.co.uk

Functionalities

Those who visit Craft Museum are given the opportunity to go through a number of exhibitions and appreciate the intricate details of various creations, produced by professional Minecraft builders. Alongside that, visitors are welcome to try out the 'Creative Server,' where they can claim their own piece of land and start creating without any restrictions.

Exhibitions

Craft Museum's main functionality is to exhibit some of the builds that were created for the 'Introduction to Minecraft's commissioning market' video series (available here and here). There are a total of 6 exhibitions and each one of them presents a different type of build. There is, for instance, an organic; a representation of how humanoid forms can be replicated inside the game by using simple Minecraft blocks. Also, an intricate ship is showcased, including not only its exterior elements, such as its deck, windows, and mast, but also interiors that players can explore. As a result, players can get an understanding of the details that make up such a creation. It goes without saying that the commonest and most beloved type of creations does not miss from this collection; houses.

The following picture depict one of the exhibits: The House. As you can see, the exhibition showcases the main steps that are followed by professional Minecraft builders in order to reach the final outcome. Starting from the simplest of step (the skeleton and the periphery of the house), visitors are expected to experience how builders think and act during their creative practice.

Figure 1 This is one of the exhibits in the server, which showcases the sequential steps involved in creating a house in Minecraft

It needs to be mentioned that visitors will be able to work on their own exhibits. The build that is situated on the centre of each of the exhibitions is editable, which means that players can freely fly on it and start working on the build itself. If they want to start from scratch though, or want to use any of the exhibited intermediary steps of a build, Craft Museum provides them with the ability to copy any of these intermediary steps onto the central square and edit them. What we aim to achieve through this is to allow visitors to experience the process of working on such builds first hand, let them experiment with what professional builders have created and, effectively, give them the chance to learn and develop their skills.

Creative Server

As we mentioned above, another functionality provided by Craft Museum is that of the Creative Server. Essentially, visitors can claim their own plot of land and start creating whatever they desire. Members of the staff that run the server might also be online, in which case feedback will be provided as to how to improve their builds. What we hope to achieve through this functionality is to cultivate a community spirit by allowing multiple visitors to share their creations, collaborate on what they create, exchange ideas and, effectively, learn from each other.

Bios

Panos Koutsouras

Panos Koutsouras started his academic trajectory in Greece, where he did his BSc studies in Information Technologies and Computer Engineering. As he always had an interest in the social side of computing and on systems design, he undertook an MSc degree in Human-Computer Interaction at York. Finally, he acquired a PhD on Digital Economy at the Horizon Centre for Doctoral Training.

His PhD research was an ethnographic investigation of the digital economy that resides within Minecraft's creative community. His work revealed this hidden economy and enriched existing

understandings on Minecraft's community. On top of that, it suggested a number of design implications for the work of building professional Minecraft content.

The culmination of his PhD studies was a project that led to the production of 'An introduction to Minecraft's commissioning market' video series, as well as to the 'Craft Museum' server.

Panos is currently working as a user researcher at Sony Interactive Entertainment Europe.

Glowfisch Design Studio

We are a design studio that mainly focuses on building and creating content in Minecraft. We have been one of the pioneering studios in Minecraft's commissioning market and we have provided our creative services to many Minecraft servers and professionals.

Working in Minecraft from a business point of view is a mystery to most and we were very happy to help in this project, as it was an opportunity to raise awareness of this business and to showcase the characteristics of our market. Minecraft is one fun little game that grabs your attention, allows you to create amazing objects and express your creativity.

With this project in particular, we wanted to show what is involved in our day-to-day work practices. To do that, we produced builds for the 'Introduction to Minecraft's commissioning market,' a series of videos that present the structure of our business. Alongside that, we coordinated the development of a Minecraft server (craftmuseum.co.uk) that exhibits how the objects in said videos were created, as well as teaches visitors how such a product is constructed. Being able to showcase this in a playful way within the game was a challenging task. We hope that this will inspire many in chasing what they love to do, overcome the creative challenges they face and maybe join us along the way.