

Social communication in online Minecraft communities for children with autism

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AUTISM:

- As stated by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, people with autism have challenges with communication and social skills.
- Examples of challenges could include having trouble with understanding word meaning, forming friendships, and/or adjusting to change and variations within their environment.



- First person 'sandbox' game
- Modes: 'Survival', 'Creative', Single or Multiplayer
- Each mode gives players the ability to design and build their own world.
- Offers many servers
- <https://www.minecraft.net/>



- Server within Minecraft that gained traction due to players with autism being its target user demographic.
- <https://www.autcraft.com/>

Minecraft seems to provide a useful digital space where players with autism can connect and share with one another to engage in fun/functional collaborative play.

METHODS:

- Data and necessary information was gathered through reviewing and analyzing 27 published articles.
- Findings suggested positive outcomes such as enhanced learning abilities, instigated friendship through games, increased motivation in the classroom.

OUTCOMES:

Communication and Chat:

1. Autcraft encourage other means of communication for neurodivergent individuals.
2. Minecraft and Autcraft has the potential to maintain friendships.
3. Minecraft and Autcraft advocates creativity above all else.

Understanding Norms and Following Rules:

1. Rules on Autcraft encourage its players to express themselves.
2. Rules are moderated by staff and administration.
3. Removal systems are put in place if necessary.

Sharing, Collaboration and Teamwork:

1. Children with autism are taught to express the appropriate emotion and reactions by the environment.
2. Working together helped neurodivergent players to be motivated to learn.
3. Through Minecraft, Autcraft supported the students' social interactions through their game avatars.

Ashley Zingillioglu and Erik X. Raj have no financial nor non-financial disclosures to report.

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