Motivations and ownership
in *Fortnite* communities

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Abstract

This thesis investigates user motivations for creating content that may or may not be added to the game Fortnite: Battle Royale, as well as the user's thoughts about the intellectual property of the content. The thesis also examines the relationship and communication between the Fortnite players and developers, according to the users. The sample was collected from the forum r/FortNiteBR on the social media platform Reddit, where users who were engaged in creating suggestions and concepts for the game were contacted and interviewed.

The discussion and analysis distinguishes positive attitudes amongst the users in regards to the empowerment and engagement the participation provides, but also showcases a disappointment amongst the users when it comes to the communication between them and the developers. The data collected display an inconsistency from Epic in terms of which users receive credit or agreements for their suggestions, something that some users have reacted upon. This thesis suggests that aspects such as the crediting of players and the communication between players and developers needs to be improved in order to for the game company to maintain a good relationship with the players.

Keywords: Games, Participation, Fortnite, User generated content, Ownership, Motivations
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1 Introduction

The game *Fortnite: Battle Royale* has become one of the most popular games in recent years and there are several examples of how the game company Epic Games has incorporated content provided by players into the game. In this thesis I want to examine the motivations behind creating voluntary content that may or may not be incorporated into a game, and what relation this form of content creation has to the concepts of prosumption and voluntarily labour. The thesis will also look at how the users perceive the ownership and intellectual property of their suggestions. By the use of a qualitative approach where users participate either in an interview or by filling in a form, the aim is to distinguish the motives behind creating content and what possible positive or negative consequences this audience participation has on both the players and the game company. The sample of respondents has been gathered from the popular Reddit forum r/FortNiteBR.

For those interested in gaming and the gaming industry, the success of *Fortnite: Battle Royale* has been difficult to miss, and as suggested by the results of the data collection in this thesis, many users feel very engaged by the community and the possibility to create something that gets added to the game. This thesis also aims to understand the empowerment that the participation provides for the users, and if this possibility of empowerment is equally distributed among all of the players.

User participation has long been a part of the gaming world, often in the form of modding (the customization or addition of game content by players). The user participation observed in *Fortnite: Battle Royale* differs slightly from this form of customisation in the sense that the users do not have access to the program files, and the implementation of content is entirely controlled by the game company and not by the players themselves. If this type of participation becomes more common it gives rise to questions about the future role of the players in the game industry.

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2 See examples of this in chapter 2.3
1.1 Problem and research questions
This thesis explores the *Fortnite: Battle Royal* community on the social media platform Reddit, aiming at gaining a better understanding of what motivates players to create content and what potential benefits or disadvantages this has for the users and the game company. The thesis also aims an understanding of how users view intellectual property issues in relation to the voluntary content produced for the community, and what this can tell us about the relationship between consumers and producers. The thesis research questions are:

- What motivates the players to create content that may or may not be used?

- In what ways is the process of participation, by the creation of user generated content, empowering for the users?

How do the users view ownership of user generated content, and what does this tell us about their perception of the relationship between the consumer/producer?

- What kind of communication is there between the content creator and the game company, regarding user generated content that makes it into the game?

1.2 Motivations and contribution to field
As a user of Reddit, I have noticed the large amount of content in the *Fortnite: Battle Royale* forum "FortniteBR", where users post ideas for outfits, improvements and other suggestions. In many cases, the content posted is often elaborate, accompanied by hand drawn or digitally created pictures illustrating the ideas. Some of the user made content has been incorporated in the game, a notable example being an idea for an outfit portraying a chicken. The concept was made by a child, further developed by the community and lastly incorporated in the game by Epic (Deason, 2018., BBC, 2018). This specific case can be seen as a form of voluntary labour, and I am interested in finding out more about whether or not Epic has been in contact with the creators of such content, and what opinions the creators have about the content being used in the game.

The questions I want to answer are related to voluntary labour, and whether or not the game company's addition of user made content can be regarded as labour exploitation (Terranova, 2013; Fuchs 2014a). It is, of course, not strange for a company to consider
feedback and user experiences in order to strengthen their products or services (Kraft, 2012), however many suggestions in the *Fortnite* community are elaborate designs of functions or costumes that could be added to the game - hence they are more than simply feedback. During my preliminary investigation of the *Fortnite: Battle Royale* forum on Reddit I got the impression that the users have mostly positive feelings about Epic incorporating the suggestions provided by the users. However, it would be interesting to gain a better understanding of the communication between the company and the content providers, as well as some knowledge about the personal views of the content creators when their content is incorporated into the game. I want to find out if there are cases where the content creators feel exploited in any way. My goal with this research is to contribute to the body of work around user generated content and to shed some light onto the relationship between game companies and players as well as the motivations for players to engage in creating voluntary content. I also wish to highlight the importance of further research into this new form of audience participation in digital games.
Although research has been conducted on the subject of motivations in creating user generated content (see for example Postigo, 2007; Yang & Ott, 2016; Sotamaa, 2010) the user generated content on the Reddit forum analysed in this thesis differs slightly from content analysed in previous works. The Reddit community dedicated to the game is neither a forum where users create content that is only consumed by other users, neither is it content that can be completely equated to that of modders since the users themselves do not implement it into a game, and do not have access to the program files. Instead the content created is a form of content that is created as a suggestion for the game company to add into the game, and it is aimed both at the members of the community and the game developers. 

**Context**

Digital games have gone from being only available at universities and research facilities in the 60's, to arcade machines and consoles in the 70's and the introduction of home computers in the 80's (Kirriemuir, 2006). In the 90's came the handheld devices such as Game Boy and Neo Geo and in the 00's digital games also became available to play on mobile phones (Kirriemuir, 2006). Today it is often possible to play the same game on a number of different platforms. In the case of *Fortnite: Battle Royale* for example, it is available on PC, Nintendo Switch, Playstation 4, Xbox One, and Android and iOS devices.

The interest for research in the field of digital games dates back to the early 1980's (Bryce & Rutter, 2006), and the field has struggled to find its own place in academia, with a debate revolving around whether or not games can or should be studied as narrative mediums or something completely new - separate from both the association with film and literature studies (Aarseth, 2001). Key research themes in games studies has been about narratology and ludology, gender, games in relation to violence, and games as educational tools (Bryce & Rutter, 2006). The modification or "modding" of games, has been studied by a handful of researchers (Postigo, 2007; Poor, 2013; Sotamaa, 2010) focusing on the motivational factors of modders. The subject of modding will be discussed further in the text in chapter 3.1. Before that however, the current chapter and sub-chapters will focus on the game *Fortnite*, the Reddit platform and forum, as well as discuss the context in which user generated content and participatory culture blossom.

### 2.1 User generated content

The definition of the term "user generated content" can vary to some extent, with some scholars differentiating between user generated and user created content. Hinton & Hjort
(2013) defines user *generated* content as content forwarded by other users, while user *created* content is made by the users themselves. For Wyrwoll (2014) user generated content is "content published on an online platform by users. The term social media compromises platforms that contain user-generated content. Users do not need programming skills to publish content on a social media platform". In this thesis the term "user generated content" will mostly refer to the suggestions and concepts created by the users on the *Fortnite* Reddit forum. Wyrwoll (2014) also notes the importance of distinguishing the meaning of user as it can refer to any user of social media -- both professionals and private. Although Wyrwoll (2014) chooses to include both professionals and private individuals in the definition, in the context of this research, *user* refers to non-professional consumers of the game *Fortnite* participating in the Reddit forum. Describing the platforms used for user-generating content, Wyrwoll (2014) distinguishes eight types: blogs, forums, location sharing and annotation platforms, media sharing platforms, microblogs, question and answer platforms, rating and review platforms and social networks. Van Dijck (2013) states that user generated content has been claimed to be "considered unfinished, recyclable input, in contrast to the polished finished products of mainstream media".

The origin of user generated content is highly associated with the transformation of the internet into a more open communicative space which became known as "web 2.0". The shift from the one-way communication system of traditional media channels such as radio, television and printed media, to a multidirectional system where consumers can participate, marks a significant change in mass communication (Wyrwoll, 2014). The term "Web 2.0" was originally coined by Dinuccu (1999) but became popular when O'Reilly (2005) presented it as a new internet platform consisting of applications that focuses attention on collaboration and participation. Hodkinson (2017) describes that applications providing possibilities for participation and user generated content became large during the first decade of the 2000's and that before this, these forms of platforms for user interactivity had only been used by a minority of internet users.

Fuchs (2014a) goes on to describe how web 2.0 and its social media platforms were "born in the situation of capitalist crisis as ideologies aimed at overcoming the crisis and establishing new spheres and models of capital accumulation for the corporate internet economy". With "crisis" Fuchs (2014a) is referring to the "dot-com crash" which occurred in early 2000 and was a financial crash of internet companies. Characteristic for web 2.0 is that it has changed the capitalist system of the internet from one focused on consumer/producer to one facilitating the engagement of prosumers (Grinnell, 2009). The audience participation in
Fortnite: Battle Royale and the user generated content the players create is an example of how players are transitioning into roles of both consuming and producing content.

2.2 Fortnite and battle royale

Fortnite is one of most popular digital games at the time of writing, with an estimated number of over 200 million players in November 2018 (Bailey, 2018). The game is currently available to play in three different game modes, but it is the game mode called "Battle Royale" that has become the most popular.

Epic games (the game company behind the game) was originally working on the main game mode called "Save the world" when they decided to include the battle royale mode as a free-to-play addition to Fortnite. The name "battle royale" is taken from the 1999's Japanese book of the same name by Takami (2009), and it is easy to understand why the game mode is named after the book. Similar to the book, the players are dropped on a small island and compete against each other to be the last player (or team) standing, navigating through abandoned houses in order to find weapons and equipment. The main similarity derived from the Battle Royale book is that the game incorporates forbidden zones, where (in the game) the player will lose life and eventually die if they cannot enter the safe zone in time.

Unlike the "save the world" mode, Fortnite: Battle Royale is free to play. However it offers a store where players can purchase cosmetic items for their avatars. In the game, items such as clothes, tools, parachutes and backpacks can be modified by the player by purchasing different "skins" in the shop. There is also a mechanic in the game where the players can perform a short dance by pressing a button, in order to taunt other players. These dances are known as emotes and are also available for purchase in the Fortnite shop.

The Battle Royale mode was most likely inspired by the game Player Unknown's Battlegrounds which uses similar rules and mechanics as the battle royale mode in Fortnite, and was popular before the introduction of the battle royale mode in Fortnite. Interstingly Player Unknowns Battlegrounds is a modded version of the game Arma 2, and it became much more popular than the original game (The Economist, 2018). While Arma 2 was developed as a training game for military forces, Player Unknown's Battlegrounds was developed by Player Unknown as a mod for Arma 2, introducing the rules associated with the battle royale" genre, including the shrinking map size in combination with random weapon drops, abandoned houses, and the first-player-shooter mechanic. The game became popular,

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3 For information about Player Unknown's Battlegrounds see: https://www.pubg.com/
4 For information about Arma 2 see: http://www.arma2.com/
but was soon out-shadowed by *Fortnite: Battle Royale*, Which led to some arguing that "*Fortnite* was simply a copy of *Player Unknown's Battlegrounds* (The Economist, 2018). It can be argued that the success of *Fortnite: Battle Royale* owes a lot to *Player Unknowns' Battlegrounds* and the work of modders (The Economist, 2018) (see further information about modders in chapter 3.1) However, it is also important to note the other factors that may have played their part in the success of *Fortnite*, such as the more cartoon-like and vibrant graphics, which has been discussed as a factor for the attraction of a younger audience to the game (Matsangou, 2018), and the mechanics that make *Fortnite* unique from other Battle Royale games: the building mechanic, where players can gather resources in order to build structures to hide behind, or to use to get into buildings or structures. Hall (2018) writes that the fact that Epic can provide the players with new updates and content in a fast pace, incorporating feedback and balancing game elements makes the game more alive and provides a seamless experience.

### 2.3 The *Fortnite* community

The game *Fortnite* is created in Epic's own game engine called Unreal Engine, which facilitates the process of constantly updating the game and adding content according to the feedback and suggestions from players, in a fast pace. Epic games have a relatively strong contact with their user base, and often take into consideration the will of the players (Khadija, 2018). Forums for feedback and suggestions for the game are for example available at *Fortnite's* own website ⁵ and other social media channels such as Reddit. The Reddit forum is one of the largest forums for *Fortnite: Battle Royale*. Reddit is a social media forum where users can subscribe to and engage in a large amount of different sub-forums called "sub-Reddits". They can also view a selection of all sub-Reddit posts in different categories such as "most popular", "new" or "hot". If a post in a sub-Reddit gains a large amount of "upvotes" or positive reviews it will appear on the r/all page which shows the most popular posts on Reddit at the time.

The *Fortnite: Battle Royale* forum on Reddit ⁶ called r/FortniteBR is a forum dedicated to the discussion of the battle royale mode of *Fortnite* and is filled with a variety of content ranging from funny recordings of players playing the game, discussions about new features, and suggestions for content to be added into the game. The posts can be tagged and sorted by different content with tags such as "suggestion" "media" and "streamer". By browsing the

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⁵ Available at: www.epicgames.com/fortnite/forums  
⁶ Available at www.reddit.com/r/FortNiteBR/
Reddit forum one can quickly see that developers are engaging in the forum (see for example content posted by Epic employers\(^7\)\(^8\)) The use of a tag called "Epic comment" shows that a post has been commented by a game developer working for Epic, and there are plenty of examples of posts where this has happened\(^9\)\(^10\).

The inclusion of user made content in *Fortnite* has not been without its debates. When Epic announced the competition "BoogieDown" to suggest a dance for the game in which the winning dance would be added as an emote for the avatars, a boy known as "orange shirt kid" became famous in the Fortnite community which campaigned for his dance to be included into the game, even though it was not the winner (Crecente, 2019). The Reddit community campaigned under the slogan "justice for orange shirt kid", and Epic later added the dance under the name "Orange Justice" featuring the description "It's also a great exercise move"\(^11\) which was a phrase used by the orange shirt kid in the video he posted for the competition. Later, a lawsuit was filed by his mother, where she claimed Epic had infringed of her sons copyright. Other lawsuits have been made by rapper 2 Milly, Alfonso Ribeiro, and "Backpack Kid" over the use of what they claim to be their dance moves in the game. (Crecente, 2019).

Some of the most upvoted posts in the forum have been user made suggestions for skins to be added into the game, and in some cases these skins have also been incorporated into the game by Epic. An example of a popular skin concept posted by a player is the "chicken trooper" skin, which was later renamed "tender defender" when it was added into the game. The skin idea originally came from the user’s son, and was later developed into a more polished version by another Reddit user. Lastly it was incorporated into the game, and the father of the child posted a video of the child's reaction when he realised the skin concept had become a reality. Below are some pictures showing how the skin concept was developed, and how it looks in the game version.

\(^7\) [www.reddit.com/r/FortNiteBR/comments/8y11o3/season_5_patch_information/](www.reddit.com/r/FortNiteBR/comments/8y11o3/season_5_patch_information/)
\(^8\) [www.reddit.com/r/FortNiteBR/comments/aphikd/740_balance_adjustments/](www.reddit.com/r/FortNiteBR/comments/aphikd/740_balance_adjustments/)
\(^9\) [www.reddit.com/r/FORTnITE/comments/9tmqcg/the_sad_truth/e8xxel4/?context=1000](www.reddit.com/r/FORTnITE/comments/9tmqcg/the_sad_truth/e8xxel4/?context=1000)
\(^10\) [https://www.Reddit.com/r/FORTnITE/comments/9ws26c/oh_boi_its_coming_to_stw/e9n2m76/?context=1000](https://www.Reddit.com/r/FORTnITE/comments/9ws26c/oh_boi_its_coming_to_stw/e9n2m76/?context=1000)
\(^11\) Orange justice emote: [fortnite.gamepedia.com/Orange_Justice_(emote)](fortnite.gamepedia.com/Orange_Justice_(emote))
Image 1: The "chicken trooper" skin suggestion made by a Reddit user's son.

Image 2: A polished version of the "chicken trooper" skin made by another Reddit user.
When researching the Reddit forum for this thesis, looking at hundreds of posts of user created content, many comments mediate a positive view of Epic's inclusion of user generated content. In some cases user's comments showed a concern for the credit or payment for user generated content. Other users also commented on the use (or lack of use) of watermarks on the images containing the suggestions for content, showing a concern for the ownership of the user generated content (at least for it not to be stolen by other users on Reddit or other forums). These comments suggest that thoughts about ownership of user generated content are present in the community; the question still remains however how this ownership compares to that of the game company.

The use of user generated content in games or other fields is as demonstrated nothing new. It seems however that the ways in which the user generated content is used and distributed in changing somewhat. The user on the Reddit community have a different power

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12. www.reddit.com/r/FortNiteBR/comments/9fig2k/tender_defender_chicken_trooper_as_suggested_by/ea4wb5/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=web2x
13. www.reddit.com/r/FortNiteBR/comments/9fig2k/tender_defender_chicken_trooper_as_suggested_by/e9pd4bn/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=web2x
14. www.reddit.com/r/FortNiteBR/comments/9fig2k/tender_defender_chicken_trooper_as_suggested_by/eeime26/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=web2x
15. www.reddit.com/r/FortNiteBR/comments/7uic83/a_friendly_reminder_to_put_some_form_of_watermark/
16. www.reddit.com/r/FortNiteBR/comments/89gmdp/conceptthefortnite_halo_br_did_i_watermark_it/
level than that of modders, since they themselves are not on charge of implementing the content. Although it can be argued that the contribution to the knowledge of games and the relationships within the industry is important enough to study, the research presented in this thesis also holds a societal relevance in its contribution to the knowledge about user participation and user generated content, as well as themes of motivation and empowerment which may be relevant for studies in other fields.

2.4 *Fortnite* and Reddit user agreements

Van Dijck (2013) explains how by using internet media platforms users are entering in an agreement with the rules created by the organisations and which are available for the user to read in sections named "terms of service" or "user agreement". These rules "touch upon the real-world realm where social norms concerning property rights, identification, privacy and sanctions for misconduct are inscribed into the laws" and are set in place to regulate these things (Van Dijck, 2013). Information about the rules user agreements of Reddit can be found on their website, and includes information about Reddit's content policy, privacy policy and user agreements. Certain types of content are prohibited by Reddit if it:

- Is illegal
- Is involuntary pornography
- Is sexual or suggestive content involving minors
- Encourages or incites violence
- Threatens, harasses, or bullies or encourages others to do so
- Is personal and confidential information
- Impersonates someone in a misleading or deceptive manner
- Uses Reddit to solicit or facilitate any transaction or gift involving certain goods and services
- Is spam

In the privacy policy a description of the information that Reddit collects from its users is available. Amongst other things Reddit collects information about the account, content that is uploaded, interactions by the users along with location information and information about purchases. Reddit states that they do not share this information unless it is: with linked

17 www.Redditinc.com/policies/user-agreement
18 https://www.Redditinc.com/policies/content-policy
services, with their partners, in order to comply with the law, an emergency, to enforce their policies, with their affiliates, with the users consent or if the information is aggregated or de-identified. Describing their rules on uploading copyright protected material Reddit writes:

Reddit respects the intellectual property of others and requires that users of our Services do the same. We have a policy that includes the removal of any infringing materials from the Services and for the termination, in appropriate circumstances, of users of our Services who are repeat infringers.

In the *Fortnite end user license agreement* Epic states how the user generated content created and distributed via third-party platforms can be used by them:

The rights you grant to Epic in this Section are provided on a through-to-the-audience basis, which means the owners or operators of third-party services will not have any separate liability to you or any other third-party for UGC provided to or used on such third-party services via the Service. Epic needs these permissions in order to make your UGC available to players as part of the Services (i.e., in-game), and to make it available to streamers and content creators off of the Services (e.g., for use on other platforms). These rights need to be irrevocable because of the many channels in which UGC is distributed by us and others after it’s created. You understand that You are not entitled to receive any compensation, fees, consideration, or other remuneration in connection with your UGC for any reason, including Epic's exercise of the rights You grant to Epic in this Section ant that Epic is not obligates to exercise the rights You grant.

Both Reddit and Epic have policies which establish in what ways users can (or cannot) use copyright protected material. Reddit states that they can remove any material infringing on someone else's copyright. Important to note however, is the vast amount of posts and "memes" (a form of inside joke on the internet, often consisting of a picture accompanied by different texts) on Reddit that are based on movies, tv-series or other copyrighted material (browsing the Reddit page r/all should provide at least some examples of this). This shows

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20 Available at: www.epicgames.com/fortnite/en-US/eula
21 https://www.reddit.com/r/all/
that in many cases on Reddit, the use of copyright protected material is allowed or tolerated. While Epic allows user to create content based on their works, they clearly state that the users are not entitled to any compensation or consideration for their content. The context provided by this chapter has aimed towards providing a basic understanding of the platforms and types of contents that this thesis investigates. The next chapter will shortly explain some previous research that has touched upon similar themes of motivations and participation in gaming communities.
3 Related Research

Related research to the subject of user generated content and motivations include works by Schleiner (2017), Postigo (2007) and Sotamaa (2010). The focus for these scholars has revolved around distinguishing motivations for game modders. Postigo (2007) describes modders as users who create different modifications or add-ons for games, including "changes in the physics of the virtual world to total conversions in game play". He distinguishes modders from "mappers" (who focus on creating new map designs for games) and "skinners" (who create new costumes or appearances for characters and weapons). The suggestions provided by the Reddit users can in many ways be compared to the work of "mappers" and "skinners", which makes the research on the motivations of modders relevant for this research. As noted before however, the users on Reddit cannot decide themselves to implement the suggested content, which mark an important difference.

This section also discusses the relation of user generated content to the concepts of convergence, participatory culture (Jenkins, 2006) and voluntary labour (De Kosnik, 2013).

3.1 Modding and motivations

The creation of voluntary content is not a new phenomenon in the world of digital games. The modification of games, also known as "modding" has been a part of the gaming world at least since the 1990's (Schleiner, 2017), and games such as Doom (1993) even engaged users to create mods for the game by sharing parts of the source code (Schleiner, 2017). While Sotamaa (2010) explains that mods may be viewed as an opposition to mainstream media he also discusses how the modders have gained support from the game developers and in many cases helped create large success for certain games. Dyer Withford and De Pueter (2009) states that the computer game industry quickly learned to encourage the modding culture, as it proved to be a "source of innovation and profit".

The motivations of computer game modders have been studied by a handful of scholars including Poor (2014), Sotamaa (2010) and Postigo (2007). Postigo (2007) distinguishes three major motivational factors for computer game modders: firstly the creation of mods gives the modder an outlet for their creativity and a sense of contributing to a community. Secondly, modding lets the modders make their own version of the game, incorporating elements that they identify with and enhancing their enjoyment of the game. Lastly, engaging in the modding of games may provide job opportunities in the gaming world. In Sotamaa's study of modder's motivations he distinguishes some similar motivations but also discusses
motivations to do with "hacker legacy" where the modders view it as a challenge to properly understand and modify the code, as well as motivations that can be of political nature, when for example adding historical scenarios into a game. In addition he argues that another motivation for becoming a modder can be that it is a way to meet people with similar interests, when engaging in forums dedicated to modding.

Poor (2014) further explores the motivation of game modders and uses the research by Sotamaa (2010) and Postigo (2010) in her survey study. The results presented by Poor (2014) shows a slightly different picture of the motivations, where the modders tend to disagree that the possibility of a job within the industry is a motivating factor for them. According to her study the major motivating factors for modders to create mods are that is makes the game better for themselves and other players, as well as it being fun.

Although some motivations for creating mods have been distinguished, the voluntary content provided by the Fortnite community differs slightly from the modding discussed by the authors above. The content provided by the Reddit users is not incorporated into the game by themselves, but simply a suggestion for the game company to do so. The motivations behind creating content that may not be included into the game may differ from the motivations of modders. The act of modding has been described as an example of "participatory culture" (Jenkins, 2006), which will be further explained below.

### 3.2 Convergence and participatory culture

In social media studies revolving around audience participation and user generated content Jenkins (2006) theories in *Convergence Culture* has had great influence. The convergence media that Jenkins (2006) describes "represents a paradigm shift -- a move from medium-specific content toward content that flows across multiple media channels, toward the increased interdependence of communication systems, towards multiple ways of accessing media content, and toward even more complex relations between top-down corporate media and bottom up-participatory culture". Jenkins (2006) describes how companies are adopting strategies to use this shift to their advantage, by exploring new ways of selling content and influence customer loyalty. He also notes that convergence can be used by the customers as a way of making demands on organisations.

Jenkins (2006) focuses a lot of attention on the participatory culture of fans and audiences in producing content that affects the media in new ways. Participatory culture is described by Fuchs (2014a) as "the involvement of users, audiences, consumers and fans in the creation of
culture and content”. Fuchs (2014a) criticises Jenkins (2006) understanding of participatory culture, as it ignores democratic factors such as ownership, profit and class. Fuchs (2014a) argues that for a media democracy to be fully participatory it must also invite customers into the ownership of organizations. He further criticises Jenkins, Ford and Green's (2013) statement that claims that the participation of every member of society is something that may never become a reality. This, Fuchs (2014a) argues, is a statement that normalizes exclusion as a part of society.

Carpentier (2016) argues that there are two main approaches in studying participation: a sociological one and a political one. While the political approach focuses on "the equalisation of power inequalities in particular decision-making processes", the sociological one defines participation as "taking part in particular social processes” and covers almost all human interaction types, including those using technologies or texts. He notes however that questions of power are not excluded from the sociological approach but that they are not the main focus. Carpentier (2016) also points to how a sociological approach considers consumption as participation. The sociological approach is also connected to the concept of engagement, something that Dahlgren (2009) describes as a feeling of being welcome and of empowerment and commitment.

De Kosnik (2013) discusses how content provided by fans can be seen as a form of voluntarily labour that can be exploited by organisations, but that fans may view this labour as "a necessary trade-off for the ability to participate in the internet's largely unregulated social media sites”. De Kosnik (2013) also highlight potential positive aspect of fan labour such as the possibilities for the careers of fans to be boosted due to their content being used in commercials and in turn even the possibilities of be hired by the organisations they have created content for or. The participatory audience in the Fortnite community are voluntarily creating content which in some cases make their way into the game. The work on social media platforms can be regarded as empowering in some aspects (see chapter 4.3.1), as well as exploitive labour (see for example Terranova, 2013).
4 Theoretical framework

The framework presented in this chapter works as a ground for understanding the essential concepts of user generated content on social media platforms. The framework focuses on distinguishing theories for understanding the social system in which such work resides, and adopts an understanding of the creators of user generated content as prosumers: the combination of consumer and producer of media. The framework also develops an understanding of the questions about motivations, empowerment and ownership in relation to user generated content.

4.1 Free labour and labour exploitation

For many media and society scholars Marx theories are understood as fundamental for the understanding of media as an integrated part of the socio-economic structure (Hodkinson, 2017), where capitalism according to Marx is understood as "the ownership of wealth and property by a small but all-powerful class group, The bourgeoisie, and the exploitation of the non-wealth owning majority, or proletariat" (Hodkinson, 2017). In Marxist theory the "means of production" refers to materials, machines and other means needed for the production of goods (these can also be computers, knowledge or skills) (Fuchs, 2014b) and in a capitalistic system these are controlled by the bourgeoisie. The proletariat are hired to use the means of production to produce goods, however they do not own the goods that they create, these have to be bought with their money earned from producing them, paying it back to the bourgeoisie once again (Hodkinson, 2017).

Terranova (2013) states that free labour on the internet is both "voluntarily given and unwaged, enjoyed and exploited" and that it amongst other things includes the building of online spaces and websites. Scholz (2013) also points to the creation of fan fiction as a form of free labour, and includes the practice of modding as an example of an unpaid form of labour, where the creative work often is ignored by the companies. However, as
demonstrated in the context chapter, modding has been an important and often encouraged part of the digital games industry, but nevertheless the work of modders has often been unpaid.

Terranova (2013) also describes free labour as an important part in value production in capitalist societies, but notes that free labour does not necessarily equal exploited labour. Discussing digital labour on social media platforms such as Facebook, Youtube and Twitter Fuchs (2014b) argues that "if the commodity of internet platforms is user data, then the process of creating this data must be considered to be value-generating labour". He also connects this type of digital labour to the concept of prosumers: a new form of capitalism where a person can be a prosumer: both consumer and producer at the same time. In relation to the user created content in the Reddit forum, presented in the context chapter, the concept of prosumption can help us understand how the users perceive the relationship between themselves and the developers, and what advantages or disadvantages this relationship provides for the users.

4.2 Prosumption

Prosumption refers to the idea of a combination of consumption and production, where the prosumer is both consumer and producer (Dusi, 2018). The term and idea was first introduced and discussed by Toffler (1980) in his work *The third wave*. Discussing Tofflers (1980) concept of prosumption, Örnebring (2008) distinguishes two types of presumption, one which he refers to as *production*, meaning that the consumer is producing for personal use (but the produced goods may be consumed by others), and another which he refers to as *customization* and explains as "customization and customer involvement in a production process still on the whole controlled and managed by somebody else" (Örnebring, 2008). He goes on to explain how a social media prosumer involved in customization only produces small amounts of content in the forms of for example votes or comments, while the production prosumer produces more substantial content which can be consumed by others. Such content could for example be the add-ons created by modders. He argues that the involvement levels are higher for production prosumers.

Ritzer and Jurgenson (2010) has further explored the concept of prosumption as a new form of capitalism and states that "control and exploitation take on a different character than in the other forms of capitalism: there is a trend towards unpaid rather than paid labour and toward offering products at no cost, and the system is marked by a new abundance where
scarce once predominated” (Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010). Zwick et. al., (2008) argue that the prosumption system grants more freedom to the consumer, and Ritzer and Jurgenson (2010) states that prosumers seem to "prefer and to enjoy prosuming, even in the cases in which they are forced into this position". However, as Ritzer and Jurgenson (2010) note that "while the worker produces a great deal of surplus values, the consumer who 'works' produces nothing but surplus value". In the case of user generated content on web 2.0 Ritzer and Jurgenson (2010) notes that even if organizations supply consumers with "some of the productive forces" the profit from for example branding is still maintained by the organization. They also criticize the use of competitions where customers compete to create designs or suggestions for an organization, with the only price being for example the winners name on the products (Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010).

Ritzer (2015) discusses the Marxist idea of false consciousness (and the potential of prosumers being affected by this) and that they view themselves as consumers rather than prosumers. Some critics have argued that Ritzer neglects the idea that prosumption can lead to other forms of value than economical ones. Although presumptive activities may not produce economic value for the customers, they produce value in the form of free services and lower prices on goods (Dusi, 2018; Zwick, 2015).

The concept of prosumption is associated with the term web 2.0 and user generated content which has become a subject of interest in media studies. For this research, the theories on prosumption will work as a ground for understanding the ways in which users in the Fortnite forum on Reddit are creating value for themselves and/or for the game company, as well as understanding the relationship between the players and the developers. In order to correctly understand the concept of prosumption in the Reddit forum, we also need to create a better understanding of the motivations in creating content, the empowerment that this action can lead to, as well as the views on ownership in user generated content.

### 4.3 Motivations and empowerment in user generated content

The motivations of creating user generated content has been studied by scholars such as Yang and Ott (2016), Poor (2013), Sotamaa (2010), Postigo (2007) and Hong and Chen (2014). Yang and Ott (2016) uses a theory based on the concept of two norms which govern the rules of participation: the market norm, where the motivation for participation is economic reward, and the social norm, which refers to motivations amongst participants that are driven by other factors than payment. Referring to the works of Kollock (1999), Yang and Ott (2016) argues
that participants in the social norm are encouraged to participate when their work is appreciated by the organisation, and that the amounts of recognition they receive affect their motivation to contribute in the future, as well as the amount of work they are willing to put down. In the social norm participants are voluntarily creating value for organisations and organisations are "encouraged to recognize stakeholders who choose to become involved with the organization by demonstrating gratitude towards them to nurture relationships with publics" (Yang & Ott, 2016).

Hong & Chen (2014) report findings of motivations amongst game modders that were tied to the approval and recognition in modding communities, as well as the possibilities of securing a job in the game industry by practicing their skills by the creation of modded content. In addition to these motivations Postigo (2007), as mentioned in chapter 3.1, has found motivational factors in modding that includes the outlet for creativity and the enhancement of the enjoyment of a game by the creation of content that the modder prefers. Findings by Poor (2014) also highlights the potential motivational factor of enhancing the game for own enjoyment, but suggests that modders are not particularly motivated by the possibilities of jobs within the industry. Discussing the voluntarily labour of Wikipedia-editors Fuchs (2014a) argues that motivations for creating content include the pleasure of intellectual work and the perceived importance of providing knowledge that can be consumed by other users.

4.3.1 Empowerment

Several authors have pointed to the different empowering potentials of social media and the participation in creating user generated content (Castells, 2015; Jenkins, 2006). Jenkins (2006) points to how web 2.0 has provided users with the possibility to make demands on organisations, as well as a source of collective intelligence. Other authors describes how social media and web 2.0 as a platform which provides opportunities for political movements (Castells, 2015; Wyrwoll, 2014) and the democratisation of news media (Chung, 2007). Common examples include the "occupy wall street" movement (Castells, 2015) where social media platforms were used as a way of attracting people to the movement and facilitating the communication of essential information. Another example is the use of social media as an alternative to the censored press during the Arab Spring (Wyrwoll, 2014).

Although social media and web 2.0 has had significant impact on such movements, scholars such as Fuchs (2014a) and Terranova (2013) points to how social media and web 2.0 creates new possibilities for organisations to exploit the labour of users. Fuchs (2014a)
explains how social media use can be exploitive in the way organisations use the information provided by users in order to for example direct advertising. A recent example of how social media content provided by users was used is of course when Facebook sold the information of millions of users to the company Cambridge Analytica (Davies, 2015). Terranova (2013) notes how the voluntarily activates of "building websites, modifying software packages, reading and participating in mailing lists, and building virtual spaces" are exploited by organisations.

Castells (2007) identifies power structures in the new media landscape, where power is controlled by "programmers", who have the power to control and alter the platform of digital media, and "switchers, who controls the connection and co-operation of the different networks. He further concludes that counter power is enacted through the re-programming of networks and the disruption of switchers. Researching empowering factors in internet based co-creation Füller (2010) find that "consumers engaging in co-creation feel more or less empowered" and that the level of perceived empowerment is depend on factors such as the design of the design tool, the enjoyment of the task, the involvement as well as the user's creativity. He concludes that these factors are of importance for the willingness of the user to participate in further co-operative processes.

4.4 Ownership and copyright in user generated content

With the rise of social media and user generated content in the new web 2.0 era, questions about ownership and copyright have complicated the existing laws (Freund, 2016). Works by Lessig, (2008) and Vaidhyanathan (2001) discuss how the current laws on copyrights can be of hindrance for the creativity of user generated content.

Discussing copyright in relation to fan-vidding communities (where users use video material from different sources to create something new), Freund (2016) focuses on the laws in the USA, noting that most of the vidding community is based in the country, and also that they mostly use materials belonging to organisations based in the USA. This is something that is also applicable to the research conducted in this thesis; hence Freunds descriptions of the laws will work as a ground for understanding copyright in relation to user generated content. In US copyright law "fair use" refers to the unauthorized allowance of using copyrighted material in ways that "do not disproportionately harm the market for the copyrighted work" (Goldstein, 2010). Freund (2016) describes how fair use has been used as an argument by American fans when protecting themselves from prosecution of the
infringement of copyright. She quotes the factors in the copyright act of 1976, 17 USC § 107 that are considered when a work is evaluated as being protected by fair use:

1. The purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes;
2. The nature of the copyrighted work;
3. The amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole;
4. The effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work.

Discussing user's views on authorship in communities dedicated to the book-series *Game of Thrones* Sarikakis et. al (2017), distinguishes a sort of "worshipping" amongst user's for the author of the *Game of Thrones* books. Sarikakis et. al. (2017) refer to Newlyn (2000) and the notions of three "divine traits" of authorship, including "(1) the idealization of the act of creation, (2) the solitude and the isolation of the creator and (3) his superior geniality" They conclude that this worshipping of the author cements the legitimisation of the original author's authority, and that it disregards "the recognition for authorship on the fans side" (Sarikakis et. al., 2017).

In their analysis of the *Game of thrones* forum Sarikakis et. al. (2017) distinguishes how factors such as the "membership of the fan community" and the "authorization by the law and industry" are important in determining the users understandings of authorship. The first process refers to how the users in the forum are creating hierarchies where more active fans receive higher levels of power and a "sense of ownership over the object of fandom". Sarikakis et. al. (2017) describes how the *Game of thrones* forum offers the chance for users to meet with the author of the books, if they have dedicated enough time and labour. Similar to this, the *Fortnite forum* on Reddit provides possibilities for the user's content to be made available in the game, but in order for the created content to not disappear amongst other suggestions, the user needs other users to vote for their suggestion.

Discussing the process of "authorization by the law and industry" Saikakis et. al (2017) explains how although the creators of fan content do not expect to earn economic compensation from their produced content, other users in the forum still consider the ownership or copyright for the works as belonging to the user who created it. Some examples from their conducted interviews showcase the will of users to share their creations with other
fans, as long as others do not claim ownership of their work. The interviews also demonstrate how users actively criticise other users who are selling their fan creations, pointing out that the copyright of *Game of Thrones* based content belongs to the author: George R.R. Martin. The work of Sarikakis et. al. shows how the forum users recognise ownership for user generated content, but that this form of ownership is worth less than Martins copyright of the book series. Sarikais et. al. (2017) concludes that the forum functions as a space where "copyright regimes" are reinforced, and where users "do no portray themselves as creators, but they still produce elaborate interpretations".

The questions of copyright in the era of web 2.0 and user generated is a complex issue to address, and although these theories might not fully illustrate who owns the intellectual property of the suggestions, Sarikakis et. al. description of the views on copyright in the *Game of Thrones* forum is useful for the understanding of how the respondents in this research view the intellectual property of their suggestions, if there are any hierarchies in the ownership of the content, and the reasons for the users to view their intellectual property in a certain way. The law on fair use is also an interesting aspect in relation to user generated content as it may in some ways contradict the user agreements and regulations set by Epic Games.
5 Research design

5.1 Method

The original idea for the research method was to contact and interview users on Reddit who had made suggestions for game content that later had been added to the game. During the process of contacting users and collecting data, the research design was altered somewhat including the addition of a form. The sample was also broadened to include users who had not had their suggestions added to the game. Since the users who had had their suggestions added to the game were more interested in participating in the interviews (four out of six did the interview), and the data collected from the interviews was significantly more in depth, the decision was made to treat the six participants with content in the game as different cases (in a multiple source case study), with the data collected from the users without in-game content serving as a sort of control and comparison group.

With research questions focused on examining feelings, perceptions and motivations, a qualitative approach was deemed suitable as it better suited for collecting this type of data, as it focuses on peoples meaning making of phenomena (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The idea of investigating feelings and perceptions connects to an interpretivist research paradigm, with an epistemological view which focuses on the interpretation process as the foundation for developing knowledge (Collins, 2010). Furthermore, the research is tied to the hermeneutic philosophy as it aims at examining the perceptions of a phenomenon (Routio, 2007a), in this case the user generated content of the Fortnite forum. An approach was adopted where participants who were not able or did not want to participate in the interview could answer the questions via a form that was created. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner, giving space to both participants to ask questions and for me to ask follow up questions on interesting themes. The questions as well as the form can be viewed in Appendix A. Because of the semi-structured shape of the interviews, the questions differed somewhat in the interviews, however all of the questions in the interview template were asked to all participants. In addition to the interview the participants were also asked to fill in a form with information about for example age, gender and nationality (see Appendix B). The forms were constructed to include lots of text boxes where the participants could answer the questions in their own words, in order to be as close to an interview session as possible. These forms can also be viewed in Appendix B.
5.2 Data collection and sample

The sample selection was conducted following a convenience sample approach (Routio, 2007b) where a group of specific users were contacted and the ones who wanted to participate were included in the sample. This sample method can be viewed as damaging for the credibility as it can be influenced by bias and include a "high level of sampling error" (Dudovskiy, 2019). However, in the case of the users with in-game content efforts were made to contact as many users as possible who had created content that could clearly be considered to have influenced the game developers. In the case of the users who had not had their content added to the game, these were selected from the most popular post in the Reddit forum, which of course may also affect the representation depending on whether or not certain content is "upvoted" more frequently, but at least partly eliminates some bias choices.

The sample of users was gathered on Reddit by contacting individual users who had created suggestions for the forum at r/FortniteBR. Research was carried out, identifying users who had contributed with interesting suggestions. The Fortnite wikipedia was used to aid in the identification and selection of users who had had their suggestions added to the game. Various lists on Youtube and other sites were also used as inspirations for which users to contact. The users who were contacted were selected from the most upvoted posts in the Reddit forum, and both users who had had their suggestions added to the game, and those who had not were contacted. Users were selected who had original ideas and a certain amount of work put into the suggestion. Contacting only users, who had had their content added into the game, would have meant that the sample would have become significantly smaller, hence the choice was made to contact both users with content in the game and users who had not had their content added. This also meant that comparisons could be made of the answers from these two different groups. Both users who had made suggestions solely focusing on aesthetic aspects of the game, such as skins, and users who had made suggestions for the improvement of the mechanics of the game, were contacted. The users were contacted on Reddit, with a message explaining the research and my role, asking the users if they would be willing to participate in an interview.

Before starting the process of contacting the users, it was assumed that there would be a relatively high percentage of users who would not reply to the message; therefore more users

22 Available at: https://fortnite.gamepedia.com/Fortnite_Wiki
23 See for example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q4-QNbC4lGI
24 See for example: https://fortniteinsider.com/fan-suggested-concepts-fortnite/
were contacted than would have been possible to interview. 40 users were contacted, where 20 had had their suggestions added to the game, and the other 20 had not. The users were sent a message on Reddit explaining the research and asking for their help in participating in it. Out of the 40 users contacted 17 replied and 13 were interested in participating. Out of these 13, one ended up not participating. Because some users did not have the possibility or did not want to participate in the interview via audio, a form was created for them to answer. 7 users answered the questions via the form, and 5 participated in the interview session. Interestingly all except one of the participants who choose to participate in the interview were all users who had had their suggestions added to the game. In the group of participants who answered the questions via the form, only one had had their content added to the game. The reason for this may be that the users, who have had their content added to the game, may have been more frequently contacted with questions about their post.

The first message was sent via Reddit, explaining in short the research and how they would contribute to it. In creating the first message, focus was aimed at not making it too long, while simultaneously convey information that would both convince the users of the validity of the research, as well as how their participation would be valuable. In order to have secured answers from more participants, the message should have been tailored to fit each individual user, focusing on their content. Unfortunately, the time schedule for this thesis did not allow for this amount of time to be spent on the first messages. An overview of the sample can be viewed in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Interview/form number</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Type of content</th>
<th>Description of in game content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tursuboi</td>
<td>Interview 1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Finnish</td>
<td>In game</td>
<td>Tomatohead skin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iBolts</td>
<td>Interview 2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>American</td>
<td>In game</td>
<td>Graffiti artist skin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tfoust10</td>
<td>Interview 3</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>American</td>
<td>In game</td>
<td>Chicken trooper skin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant 1</td>
<td>Interview 4</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>American</td>
<td>In game</td>
<td>Asset based skin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant 2</td>
<td>Form 1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>American</td>
<td>In game</td>
<td>Map area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8bitmemes</td>
<td>Form 2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>In game</td>
<td>Emote and game mode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant 3</td>
<td>Interview 5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Finnish</td>
<td>Not in game</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nhojcs</td>
<td>Form 3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>Not in game</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totenkreuz</td>
<td>Form 4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>American</td>
<td>Not in game</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant 4</td>
<td>Form 5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>Not in game</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitteh6660</td>
<td>Form 6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Canadian</td>
<td>Not in game</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant 5</td>
<td>Form 7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Albanian/German</td>
<td>Not in game</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1**: Sample overview and description
5.3 Validity and limitations

Since the sample is not random, it cannot in general terms be viewed as representative of all users and providers of content on the forum. Furthermore the research conducted is of a qualitative nature; hence the focus is not on representation but rather a deeper understanding of certain cases and dynamics (Merriam & Sharan, 2015). The collected data should be viewed as individual cases of participation, where the specific cases of participation is explored in a more in-depth manner, allowing for the personal and unique experiences of the users to take focus. The interviews are especially important for the understanding, as are the specific cases where users have had their content added to the game, since they can tell us more about their experiences of the contact between players and developers, as well as their feelings around this subject. The result section in this thesis consists of a rather long description of the users answers to the questions, this is in order to increase the validity and trustworthiness of the research in a way that ensure the reader that the right conclusions are drawn (Firestone, 1987).

There is not a large amount of cases where it is obvious that Epic has taken inspiration from the suggestions of the users, however there are a handful of cases where suggestions are likely believed to have inspired the content added to the game. Preferably, I would have liked to have spoken with more users with suggestions that have made it into the game, but since there were a limited amount of users to contact (and some who I would have liked to contact had deleted the account associated with the suggestion), the amount of users participating would also be limited. However, the users who chose to participate have created suggestions of high interest for this study and their content will be further described in chapter 6.

The research may not explain how the vast majority of Fortnite players feel about user involvement or the relationship between users and developer, in fact as several subjects stated: Reddit is only a minority of the Fortnite player base. It is, however interesting that this forum seems to have a certain amount of influence on the development of the game, and to explore this is important in order to understand how the game industry is adopting new strategies in user's involvement. Since the research focuses on the experiences and in ways - feelings, of the users in relation to this new form of game development (or user engagement in games) a qualitative study is of higher interest. The interviews have provided fruitful in understanding the different emotions surrounding the motivations and contact between the developers and players. Nevertheless, the form and the "free text" structure that was applied to them, also provides information that can benefit the comprehension of the interviews and
vice versa. In order for a qualitative research to be trustworthy, it is also important to follow ethical guidelines when collecting and treating the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

5.4 Ethical considerations
Considerations were made in regard to the anonymity of the users. Since Reddit is a rather anonymous form of social media compared to platforms where users display their names and images of themselves, the first message that was sent informed the users that their real name would not be needed for the research. In the form sent along with the interviews (or incorporated into the form for respondents via text) the participants could also choose not to reveal their nationality and gender if they did not wish to. For the alternatives on these questions, see Appendix B. During the interviews the subjects were asked to permit the recording of their voices for the data collection (everyone agreed with this). In the form sent to both interview and form respondents, the participants agreed that the material would be used for the research, and could choose if they wanted their Reddit username to be used in the text or not. An additional form was sent to the respondents further explaining in what ways the data collected would be used, and what rights the respondents have. This form can be viewed in Appendix C. These measurements were taken to ensure that the participants of the study could give informed consent (Kvale, 2007), fully understood how the material would be used, and that they themselves gave permission for me to use it. The users who participated in this study were also asked if their suggestions on Reddit could be described briefly in the text, and whether or not the images accompanying them could be showed. Kvale (2007) discuss the importance of reflecting over who should give consent, something that may be especially important to consider in case of the underage informants in this study. In the cases where the participants were under the age of 18, I chose to not include their Reddit username; however the data collected was still included in the sample to be able to include a more diverse sample in terms of the age groups. Some users, who agreed to this, are referred to by their Reddit username, while users who wanted to stay anonymous or were underage are referred to as "informant" - followed by a number.
6 Results and analysis

For the purpose of providing the reader with a better understanding of the results and findings in the interviews, this chapter briefly describes the suggestions made by the participants before going ahead with presenting the results from the interviews or forms. At the end of the chapter, the texts discuss the research questions and what answers the results provide for them. In the cases where permission was granted, there are images displaying the suggestions and concepts created by the specific users, as well as pictures showing the content added to the game by Epic.

6.1 Results - in game

The users who have created suggestions that have been added to the game have in four cases created suggestions for skin concepts and in the other two cases, suggestions for a game mode and an emote, as well as an area of the game map. Four of the users participated in the interview, while two answered the questions via the form.

6.1.1 Interview 1- Tomatohead skin

Reddit user Tursuboi, age 18, from Finland created a skin using an already existing asset in the game - a tomato from a building in the game. In the game, the tomato has a face and sits on top of a building in a location in the game world known as "tomato town". Tursuboi came up with the idea of creating a skin with the tomatohead, drawing a suggestion where the head is placed on top of a body, adding a few original details such as an apron. He uploaded it to the r/FortNiteBR and the suggestion received plenty of attention, with according to Tursuboi, a majority of people supporting the addition of the skin into the game, and a large number of users later congratulated him when a similar skin was added to the game. Tursuboi explains in the interview that he was happy and surprised when he found out that a skin similar to the one he suggested had been added to the game:

Well I was on Discord with my friends and one of my friends saw the post and we were all like...like it was like pretty surreal because I didn't think anything [...] of it. I made it in like 10 minutes and it was like, I think, one or two months after I made the suggestion that they did add the skin and I was... like I was really surprised and yeah, I was pretty happy
Image 4: Tursuboi’s skin concept

Image 5: The tomatohead skin available in the game
Speaking about what he enjoyed about creating the suggestion, Tursuboi explains how he is currently studying visual arts and how he has always liked arts and enjoyed creating it: "It just feels natural to me to make something when I'm a bit worried, or I didn't have anything else to do, so then I just grab my pen or start drawing with my computer". When asked about why he uploaded it to the forum he explains how his friends suggested that he should upload it, and that he also wanted it to be added to the game. Discussing the best thing that could happen to a suggestion he uploads, he points to the happiness he felt when the tomatohead skin was added, but also explains how the community feedback and support was an important thing for him as well.

When talking about protecting one's artwork by the use of watermarks, Tursuboi thinks it is important to use watermark to protect the work from being stolen by other people but explains that he didn't watermark his tomatohead suggestions because he spent so little time on it. Tursuboi discusses how Epic's right to use the user generated content in any way that they want may be a bit unfair on the content creators if they do not get any recognition from their work:

Tursuboi: ...well of course they have the right to do it... like, it's good for the company, [...] but for [...] the content creators there who make suggestions it can be a bit like... harsh if we don't get any recognition at all.

Maria: do you think it's immoral?

Tursuboi: yeah but, like... Well they have the right to do it, but yeah... they could do it differently.

Tursuboi goes on to explain that although he is happy that the skin concept is in the game he was a bit disappointed by the lack of communication from Epic. In his original post on Reddit he received a comment from an Epic employer saying "That's a SCARY Good outfit idea! Definitely gives the Crackshot a run for its money for the best smile award"\textsuperscript{25}, but after this he had no more contact with the company before or after the introduction of the tomatohead skin to the game. He says "yeah I'm fine that they, like didn't contact me in any way but it would have been kind of them to contact me, or at least try". He also explains that he

\textsuperscript{25} [https://www.reddit.com/r/FortNiteBR/comments/7tk8qc/new_skin_suggestion/dtdkpe3/](https://www.reddit.com/r/FortNiteBR/comments/7tk8qc/new_skin_suggestion/dtdkpe3/)
expected them to contact him if they were going to add the skin. Tursuboi received no compensation from Epic and explains that he had to buy the skin himself from the shop, but that he was glad to. However some other users commenting on the original post with the skin concept suggested that he should have got the skin for free.

Discussing the relationship between the players and the developers of Fortnite Tursuboi states that he thinks that Epic is listening to the community in some cases, but not always, this is, he thinks because the scale of the fan base:

Of course it's a huge company and they have a huge base so of course they're [...] not going to... they don't have time to listen to everyone. [...] Like I heard that there were some major updates to the game that most of the people didn't like, or most of like [...] the better players didn't like and so they I think they tried to make it more like n00b friendly... yeah I think they've done a good job, of course it's the biggest game ever so of course they did something right

He then goes on to discuss how he thinks a close relationship between the players and the developers is a positive thing since the players are the ones playing the game, and they have a lot of feedback and knowledge to give, but that it can perhaps be hard for the company to know who to listen to - the new players or the more experienced ones. Tursuboi describes how the game company Valve uses a system for suggestions that he thinks is better, where users can vote on the content, and also receive credit and compensation.

6.1.2 Interview 2 - Graffiti skin

Reddit user IBolts, age 25, USA, created a skin concept for Fortnite depicting a girl with a painter's mask and paint-stained clothes, and in addition to this a skin for the pickaxe which depicted a paint roller. IBolts explains how he works with painting houses, walls, ceilings and cabinets and how he has always wanted a graffiti artist and a paint roller in the game, so he decided to create and upload a suggestion to the forum. A similar skin was added to the game, with a few differences like for example the girl having her hood up instead of down, and the painter's mask hanging around her neck, instead of wearing it on her face. IBolts had no contact with Epic and received no compensation for his skin concept. He had to buy the skin himself. IBolts explains his reaction when he found out the skin was added to the game:
"It got like to the front page and I didn't think much of it you know [...] I woke up at 5:00 a.m. to check out what was in the battle pass and I just happen to look in the battle pass [...] and I see it and I just was like "holy crap", but then I kind of I took it out of my brain like "no, no they didn't put it in here because of me" [...] - the paint roller wasn't in there, just the girl you know so...like "no, no, that's not because of me" - I kind of humbled myself [...] and then that day the pickaxe got leaked - the paint roller, and that was when I was like "holy crap"... and my brother is like "yeah that's because of you"

Image 6: IBolts skin concept for a graffiti artist
When asked about what he enjoys about creating and uploading suggestions and concepts, IBolts explain that he likes the thought of uploading something that people might like, and that in turn may gain attention from the community managers and the employers at Epic. He also explains that when he has made suggestions he has wanted to create something that a lot of players would enjoy and use and not just something that would make his own experience in the game better. He states that he doesn't care a lot about credit but enjoys the "stamp of approval" from the community and company:

I wouldn't even care for credit, like some people said "oh were you ever credited for the graffiti skin" and I said no, but they don't... nobody was credited for the tomato skin or the chicken skin, you know, but like... it's just
one of those things that I think the community sees and they put in the game and it's kind of like a wink at the community and I like that wink like "we saw you, you know"

Discussing the ownership of the user generated content, Ibolts says that he thinks it is important in some situations to watermark the content but explains that he does not do it since he thinks that it is possible for him to prove that he made it in other ways. Reflecting over Epic's right to use the user generated content he explains that he think Epic has the right to do it but he wishes that sometimes they would be better at communicating with the users when they use something created by them: "sometimes I wish that they would reach out and just be like "hey look we really liked your post we're going to use it in the game or we're going to do something like that in the game" - just a comment you know". He points out that he thinks that the users who upload content under the tag "suggestion" are all doing it with the hopes or intention that it could get added to the game, and that for him credit or compensation is not a goal.

Speaking about the community and the relationship between the players and the developers, Ibolts discusses how it benefits the players in the ways in which they can influence the game, and he explains how he has never played a game before where he has felt so involved and how he really enjoys this. He also points out, however, that the Reddit community does not make out all of the players of the game, and how the focus on the Reddit community can leave out a large numbers of players from involvement. Discussing ways in which to improve the communication between the players and the developers, he suggests the introduction of a polling system, where users can vote on whether or not they want something to be implemented into the game.

6.1.3 Interview 3 - Chicken trooper skin
The interview with Reddit user Tfoust10 differed slightly from the others, Tfoust10 has not made any suggestions himself but him and his son became very famous when he uploaded a concept that his son had made which was developed and later added to the game. Tfoust10 uploaded a suggestion for a skin made by his son, explaining how his son had been telling him to send his suggestion to the game company. The post quickly became very popular and other users made their own versions of the skin, inspired by the kid's drawing. He was contacted by Epic, and entered an agreement with them, the skin however, he had to buy
himself. The chicken trooper skin was later added to the game under its new name "Tender Defender". Tfoust10 explains how the skin came to be:

My son had been asking me, or he had been telling me that I needed to call *Fortnite* and tell them about his idea, and for the first few times he told me this I just kind of was hoping he would quit telling me about it, because I didn't really know what I was supposed to do[...], so I ignored him and ignored him and [...] then finally he gave that up and then he decided to draw out his idea [...] and he was just going to go ahead [...] and have mom do it because dad wasn't doing the job, so I figured I would just go ahead and post it on Reddit [...] and when I woke up in the morning my inbox [...] had blown over [...] so I kind of figured after seeing how it went that night that it would kind of turn into something and [...] I was really surprised that it would go the way it did [...] and for (his son, authors censoring) I think that part of him was, you know, surprised but part of him I think... he really was convinced anyway that "yeah of course, why wouldn't it work?"

For Tfoust10 the motivation for uploading the suggestion was firstly so that he could show his son that he had done it, and he says that the fact that it worked out was a surprise, but that both him and his son were excited. He explains how users on Reddit were really supportive and how other users made developments of his drawings and sent him drawings via mail.

Speaking about Epic's right to use the user generated content on Reddit, Tfoust10 expresses how he thinks that users who uploads content under the tag "suggestions" are aware of how it can be used, but he also points out that the question of ownership is interesting since "the forum is not really Epic's forum, it's just that it's a forum for people that like the game so [...] since no one's really submitting anything directly to *Fortnite* or Epic.. and you know, I guess that's a good question". He also explains how he has seen suggestions from other users that had been added to the game and how he "had assumed that Epic was reaching out to them" and he states that "if Epic did take some idea directly from somebody else, I think that [...] they should probably, you know, take care of them somehow". He also suggests that if Epic uses an idea for a skin, the user who made it could get a code to get the skin for free.

Discussing the relationship between the developers and the players, Tfoust10 says that Epic "have a good history of implementing ideas that other people have out in Reddit" and
that they are definitely taking feedback from the community. Reflecting over the advantages and disadvantages of a close relationship between the players and the developers, he says that for the game company the amount of content and feedback from the users may perhaps be overwhelming and make you lose direction when trying to please as many as possible. He also discusses how the players may get unrealistic expectation and refers to how his son has wanted to put up more suggestions, expecting them to do as well as the chicken skin concept. In terms of the communication he thinks that it may be frustrating for the players to not be able to have more direct contact with the developers, but that it benefits the developers to be able to "cherry-pick" the content they want to add.

6.1.4 Interview 4 - Informant 1

A Reddit user aged 31, created a skin based on an asset already in the game, in a similar way to the skin concept by Tursuboi. He was not contacted by Epic, and received no compensation. He also had to buy the skin himself. He explains his reaction when he saw that the skin was added to the game:

Well I was just off doing something, and my son was looking at the item shop and he saw it come in, and he was like "What? Wait a minute, didn't you make this?" [...] And I looked, and like to me it was absolutely undeniable at the time - because it had the same [...] colours [...] and the same exact base shirt, [...] some of the details were even the same [...] , and the thing that really made me sure was the back bling which was literally the one I put on there, it looked like 99% the same, like to me, in that moment it was unfeasible they didn't copy it. So yeah, I got it right away and I'm thinking like "alright, this is cool, maybe they'll like say they got inspiration and stuff", but I don't know, never happened

Discussing what he enjoys about creating concepts for the forum he says that he enjoys drawing and creating something from the ideas given to him by his son. He also states that the fact that Epic has implemented suggestions by users before, and that there is a chance, however slim, of it getting added to the game, is one thing that appeals to him. Furthermore, he says that he is also using it as a way of practicing his skills in the hope of working with design in the future. He adds that his expectations are not that the content will be added but rather to get feedback from the community, and that hopefully people like his work.
Discussing how Epic uses the content, he says:

I mean they have added other stuff and they haven't came out and admitted it, like I'm 99% sure they look at it... they, you know, look at the Reddit and they take ideas from there, but as far as I can tell, there's like two or three confirmed instances where they've actually admitted "we've taken fan stuff and used it"

He goes on to explain how he does not think it's right of Epic to use the user generated content on Reddit in any way that they want, since they have paid some users for their content, and not others: "they've set the precedent of paying at least two people confirmed, so if you're going to do that you can't take things anymore without giving people, you know, credit or compensation or whatever". He explains that he is aware of the argument that because he used assets that already existed in the game, there is a chance that Epic did not use his suggestions as inspiration but simply used their own assets. However, he points to the details, and placement of certain assets that was unique to his concept. On the post on Reddit, he states that half of the users were saying that Epic was not inspired by his concept, and that the skin was a natural development of the assets that were already in the game. He adds that he is not upset, but explains how he would have wanted them to contact him and credit him, and how they should pay all users which content they use, if they are paying some.

Talking about the relationship between the players and the developers, he states that he certainly believes that Epic is taking inspiration from the Reddit forum, but that they do not always admit it. He also explains how he thinks that Epic is focusing too much attention on the views off streamers and the users on Reddit, which is only "a vocal minority" and that they "might get the wrong impression of what people really want".

### 6.1.5 Form 1 - Informant 2

A Reddit user, age 16, USA, made a suggestions for an area of the map (Fortnite often changes areas on the game map, adding new and different buildings and terrain), which added new buildings and environments to a map area. An area which was very similar to his concept was later added to the game. He describes his reaction when the map area was added:
I thought it was wild. I was up at 4am waiting for the patch notes to drop, and didn't know if I was hallucinating or not. At first I didn't even realize what had happened. I was reading through the new locations and saw [name of suggestions, censured by author] and glanced over it without thinking about it. I did a quick double take and quickly pulled up Reddit, freaked out for a sec, and texted everyone I knew that played *Fortnite*.

Explaining what he enjoys about creating suggestions for the forum he lists factors such as his general enjoyment of the game along with his love of game design and content creation. He explains how the main reason for him to create content and upload it to Reddit is that he loves to do it, he describes how much of the content is "passion projects". He also describes other factors such as feedback and validation from the community as important reasons for him to create suggestions, as well as to try and get the content added to the game. He writes that the best thing that could happen to a suggestion would be if it was added to the game.

Discussing the relationship between Epic and the community, he writes that he believes that Epic could improve their general communication with the community, and be more transparent on why they implement certain changes. He writes that more communication would benefit both the players and the developers. He also states that he was not contacted by Epic in relation to their use of his concept, and that he would have liked to have been, but that it does not matter very much to him. When asked if he was compensated for his suggestion, he writes that he was not and that he does not think that he should have been, since "They probably didn't make any money specifically off my idea, and it might've even *cost* them more money to develop the location than they would've made off it". He goes on to explain that if it would have been a skin concept that got added, then he would have liked some small compensation, since this is something that they can make money off of (the skins are sold to players in the shop, in contrast to the location which is a part of the game map and available to everyone for free). Discussing Epic's right to use the content created by the users, He explains that:

As long as Epic is only taking from *completely community created* suggestions, I think it's fine, as uploading your suggestions under the tag (in my opinion) is giving consent for it to be used in Epic's work. The problem comes when someone inevitably uploads a video of a copyrighted dance of a
licensed piece of work. There I don't believe Epic had any right to use the content, just because someone wanted it in the game.

In regards to ownership of the content created by users, He does not think it is very important for him to watermark his content and he writes that "If someone wants to post one of my suggestions on Instagram, and gain 1000's of likes and followers then so be it. I really don't mind".

6.1.6 Form 2 - 8bitmemes

Reddit user 8bitmemes, 18, Spain, suggested an emote to be added to the game called T-\textit{pose}. The emote exists in other games such as counter-strike but had yet to be introduced to \textit{Fortnite}. The emote was added into the game. 8bitmemes also created a suggestion for a new mode to be added to the game, where players could play in teams of three people; this concept was also added to the game. 8bitmemes explain how he was surprised and happy when the concepts were added.

Discussing what he enjoys about creating suggestions for the forum, he writes that he likes that "All content starts out on an even playing field. Your content is not judged by the popularity of your profile but rather the quality of your post". He explains that he creates suggestions because there is a chance for it to be added to the game, but also point out that it is a great way for him to express his creativity - a "creative outlet". For 8bitmemes, the best thing that can happen to one of his suggestions is for it to be added to the game and he describes how his best posts were the ones that got added to the game (the T-\textit{pose} emote, and the Trios game mode suggestions).

Speaking about his "Trios" game mode suggestions he goes on to explain how he received "a couple messages from an Epic dev, not asking permission or anything but just letting me know they were putting it in" and how this gives validity to the claim that it is his idea that is in the game. He writes that:

No matter how popular a post get, if it gets in the game someone will always say "They were already going to add that". However, when you see an Epic Developer credit you, there isn't much doubt that it truly is your idea in the game.
In regards to the relationship between Epic and the community, 8bitmemes believes that the communication could be improved from Epic's side but that this is also an expectation from the players that may be difficult for the developers to live up to. Answering the questions about ownership, 8bitmemes state that he thinks it is important to watermark the work you upload, because of the risk that other users may repost the work and get credit for it. In terms of Epic's right to the user generated content, he believes that Epic has the right to use it in any way they want, and asks why people would upload suggestions if they did not want them to be added to the game.

As previously mentioned, 8bitmemes was contacted and credited for one of his suggestions. He writes "For the Trios concept I got a couple messages from an Epic dev, not asking permission but just letting me know they were putting it in. I was psyched". He explains that he didn't receive any compensation, and that he does not think he should have, even if it would have been nice.

### 6.2 Results - not in game

Six respondents had not had their content added to the game. One participant chose to participate in the interview while five answered the questions via the form.

#### 6.2.1 Interview 5 - Informant 3

A Reddit user aged 17 from Finland, has made suggestions to the forum but has not had any of them added to the game. He explains that he created the suggestions because he enjoyed the game, and he felt that there were things that could be improved upon. He states that the main reason for creating them was to get the content in the game, but also to receive feedback from the community.

Discussing Epic and the community, He states that he thinks that Epic considers the views of the players to a certain extent and that a close relationship between the two parts could benefit the company since it keeps the players engaged, but that by just looking at the Reddit forum, a large part of the player base is ignored.

In regards to the ownership of the user generated content, He believes that content tagged with "suggestions" is content that the user who uploaded it would want to be used in the game, but he adds that he thinks it might be good if Epic contacted the user if they were going to use their suggestion in the game. Furthermore, he states that if he would create a skin suggestion or a suggestion in which he had put in work, and which was original (rather
than suggesting a feature), then he would have wanted Epic to compensate him if they were going to use his suggestion, or at least credit him.

6.2.2 Form 3 - Nhojcs

Reddit user Nhojcs, age 21, Sweden, has created various suggestions for the Fortnite forum and writes that he loves to create content in Photoshop and that the Fortnite sub-Reddit at r/FortNiteBR is where he has had the most success in gaining attention from other users. He states that the reason he has continued to create suggestions is the feedback he gets from the other users, and that the best thing that could happen to one of his suggestions would be for it to be added to the game, and that he received credit for it.

Nhojcs suggests that Epic should improve how they credit the users whose content are added to the game, and explains that he thinks that it is very rare for these users to get any credit for their work from the company:

Jag tycker att de borde belöna/skriva vem som skapade vad det nu är de väljer att lägga in i spelet. I nuläget så gör de ganska sällan något sådant tyvärr.

Translation from Swedish: "I think they should reward/write who created whatever it is they choose to add to the game. At the time being it is rare for them to do something like that". He writes that he believes that Epic has the right to use the suggestions made by the users in any way they want, as long as they give credit to the user who made it. He believes that the close relationship between the players and the developers is something that will ensure that the game will have a longer lifetime and that players will continue to play it, since they can be involved in deciding some aspects of how they game should work. Nhojcs describes that he would be very happy if one of his suggestions made it into the game, and that is a bit of a dream scenario.

6.2.3 Form 4 - totenkreuz

Reddit user Totenkreuz, 25, USA, writes that he enjoys taking screenshots in video games and uses these when creating the suggestions, he also describes how his suggestions are often based around customising the player character and how this is one thing he really enjoys in games. He explains that he engages in creating the suggestions mostly because he thinks it is fun, but also reveals that the best thing that could possibly happen after he uploaded a
suggestions would be to get a job offer or a creator code. He describes how he would be "ecstatic" if he found out that one of his suggestions would be added to the game.

Totenkreuz writes that he thinks Epic needs to "take back the reigns" and that the community has gotten too used to getting their will through. He describes how he thinks that some of the community ideas have been good, and that listening to the community helps to keep the game fresh, but that there is a danger in doing too much that the community says. In regards to the questions about ownership he does not think it is important for himself to watermark his content since he does not make any money from it. Furthermore, he believes that Epic has the right to use the suggestions created by the users, since when "the uploader chooses 'suggestion' they're implying that they have something they want to see in the game".

6.2.4 Form 5 - Informant 4

A Reddit user aged 15, from The United Kingdom, explains how she creates suggestions for the forum because she likes when other users enjoy them, and that it would be great if one of them would end up in the game. She thinks that Epic considers the ideas and suggestions of the players relatively often, and describes how the close relationship between the two parts can help the game company to understand what the players want to see in the game.

Answering the questions about ownership, she states that she thinks it is important to watermark her work, since she would not want other people to claim it as their own. Regarding Epic's right to use the suggestions she believes that since they are just that - suggestions for the game, and that Epic has the right to use them how they want.

6.2.5 Form 6 - Kitteh6660

Kitteh6660, 24, Canada, describes that he enjoys creating suggestions because it gives an "impression that you can someday alter the game" and also because he enjoys the feedback from other users, but that his main reason for creating them is to improve the game. For Kitteh6660, the best thing that could happen to a suggestion would be if it was implemented into the game, and that if this happened he would be very happy about it. He also states that to be contacted by Epic, is also one of his goals.

He agrees somewhat to the statement that Epic often considers the suggestions and ideas of the players, and describes how a close relationship between the players and the developers "allows for more transparency" as well as a better understanding of the demands of the player base. He further explains how he thinks that Epic should credit the users whose content they use.
6.2.6 Form 7 - Informant 5

A 17-year-old Reddit user from Albania/Germany, describes how he enjoys the feedback he gets when he uploads his suggestions to the forum, and how "I always have ideas in my mind where I'm not sure if others would like to see those changes in-game and r/FortNiteBR always gives great feedback". He explains that he creates the suggestions for fun, to get feedback, to express his opinion but also to perhaps one time get to see it added to the game. He also states that it would be great if he got contacted by Epic.

He strongly agrees that Epic considers the ideas of the players, and describes how "They always talk to the community and I think that's one of the biggest reasons why Fortnite is so big". Discussing the questions about ownership, he writes that he rarely watermarks his content, but that he understands that people do it in order to prevent theft. In regards to how Epic can use the content he believes that suggestions can be used in any way by Epic.

6.3 Analysis

Although the interview concerns many individual cases of user generated content, there are some clearly distinguishable themes that are emerging when it comes to motivations, ownership questions and the thoughts on the communication between Epic and the Fortnite players. These themes will be discussed below in order to be further developed in relation to the framework, in chapter 7.

6.3.1 Motivations and ownership

When looking at the results, it is clear that certain factors are reoccurring motives and motivations for the users to create content. One, perhaps, expected factor, is that the users want to see the suggestions added to the game, but a large number of users are motivated by the feedback they get from the community, as well as the enjoyment they get from creating the suggestions. There was also a user who was motivated to practice their skills for future job opportunities.

At a first glance, the motivations found amongst the users in the Fortnite forum are similar to the ones described by Postigo (2007), Poor, (2014), and Hong & Chen, (2014). However, it is important to note that the users on Reddit are not themselves in charge of adding the content into the game, but are motivated by hopes that it may get added by the company. The motivation of receiving feedback seems to take a central role in the users as
well, and the sense that the community supports and engages both the players and the developers becomes prominent. The views on ownership and how Epic should use the suggestions provided by the users, differs slightly in the different cases. In terms of the protection of their own works by the use of watermarks, the majority of the users agree that it may be good to prevent others from taking credit for your work, but at the same time, they explain that it is not something that they tend to use themselves, and that they are not that concerned about people using their work. In regards to how Epic can use the suggestions, many users believe that the suggestions can be used in any way, since the users who have uploaded them have in a way stated that it is a suggestion for the game, and that they want it to be added. Other users such as iBolts and Informant 3 have a slight different view of the issue and point to the importance that the users get credit, or even compensation for the work that they have created. iBolts also points out that if some users are getting paid or credited, it is only fair if others should as well. Users are more concerned about others stealing their content, than Epic not crediting them or compensating them. However, some users think that compensation and credit is important, and this suggests a stronger sense of ownership of the created content.

The questions about credit is more important for most of the users, than receiving compensation for their work, and several users express the opinion that Epic should put more effort into crediting the users whose suggestions they implement into the game. It is clear that Epic has displayed an inconsistency in the crediting and compensation of users whose suggestions have been used, with some users having had no contact with Epic (For example: Informant 2, Informant 1 and iBolts), while others have entered into agreements with them (TFoust10). Informant 1 also raises an important point in discussing his concept, which used assets that were already in the game, which concerns how "original" a suggestion is viewed if it uses ideas from the game. In the case of Informant 1, he felt that the community was divided about the question of whether or not the skin was added because of his suggestions, or if Epic was going to add a skin similar to that in any case. However, user Tursuboi who created a skin suggestions with a similar use of already existing assets, expressed that the community was very positive and that he received hundreds of comments congratulating him when the skin was added to the game. Perhaps the difference in these cases was that an Epic developer had commented on Tursuboi’s post.

The users on both sides point to an important and interesting issue in the user generated content on the Fortnite forum. Of course, from reading the terms and conditions of user generated content on Epic's website, it may be clear that they do in fact have the right to use
content based on the game in any way they want. The question however is how the fan base reacts if they are not credited for their work and if in some cases only parts of the contributors are credited or compensated. The opinions expressed by the users suggest that, although the ownership of the suggestions are not important in the sense that they want to necessarily make money from them, but rather that they want to have the credit for creating a certain suggestion if it gets implemented to the game. And the fact that some users are getting this while others are not, may become problematic if Epic wants to maintain a good relation with the player base and communities.

Tfoust10 adds an important point to the discussion on ownership, saying that the Reddit forum is not Epic's own forum, but simply a separate community for players who enjoy the game, and he reflects over Epic's right to use content from this forum even if the premises that the tag "suggestions" sets implies that the user allows for the content to be added to the game. Although Epic state in their user license agreement that they have the right to use user generated content in almost any way that they want (see chapter 2.4). Whether or not the regulations on "free -use" is applicable on the user generated content in the Fortnight forum is perhaps difficult to distinguish. However, the question is not unimportant to consider. In any case, the users all expresses an excitement over having their content added to the game, and the focus of concerns revolve mostly about the lack of communication from Epic's side.

6.3.2 Contact and relationship

The issues of ownership have shown to be highly related to the communication and contact between the players and the developers, especially for the users who have had their content added to the game. Many users express a disappointment in the lack of communication and wished for a message thanking them for their contributions. Some users (Tursuboi, Informant 1) state that they expected to be contacted if the suggestions made it into the game, and while some users are more concerned about the lack of contact than others, most agree that they think Epic should be thanking the users whose content have been added to the game.

The interviews have also shown that some users are concerned about Epic focusing too much attention on a small part of the player base, the fact that the users on the Reddit forum gain a lot of attention from the developers, risk to exclude other players who are not participating there. Users also express concerns about the balance of the involvement of the players - some suggestions are not enjoyed by everyone and by listening too much on the users on Reddit, the game might lose its way. Some users like Tursuboi and IBolts suggest the addition of a better system, where users can vote on the content they want to be added and
receive credit and compensation in an easier way. Most users agree that the communication from Epic is something that should be improved.

The relationship between Epic and the players is viewed by most users in a positive light, although many agree that certain improvements could be made relating to the communication and the crediting of players whose suggestions are used in the game. There is a general feeling amongst the users that the game and the way it involves the players, is something that is slightly unique for *Fortnite*, and something that many regard as an important factor in the success of the game. There is also a strong feeling of community amongst the users, and many regard the feedback from the users on the forum as an important motivational factor for creating the suggestions.
7 Discussion

In order to properly answer the research questions, the theories described in the framework needs to be applied to the results from the data collection. This chapter will look at how the results are connected to the theories of prosumption, free labour, empowerment, ownership and the motivations of modders, as well as discussing what role the current copyright laws and user agreements play in the creation of content by the players.

7.1 Motivations, empowerment and communication

As suggested by the results of the data collection, the motivations for creating content are similar amongst the respondents to the motivations found amongst modders by Postigo (2007), Poor (2014), and Hong and Chen (2014). Motivations such as the feedback from the community, the enhancement of the game for others or for own enjoyment, the creative outlet the creation of the suggestions provides as well as the practicing of skills in order to secure a job in a similar industry in the future, were all mentioned by one or several of the respondents in interviews and forms. The result from this research shows that one of the most common motivations for the respondents was for the content they created to be implemented in the game. In fact, this seemed to be a fundamental motivator for almost all respondents who uploaded content under the suggestion tag, however, many were also quick to note that they did not expect that their suggestions would be added, and that they also enjoyed creating it because of the feedback from the community, and the general enjoyment they got from creating it. The motivation of getting a suggestion added to the game, can be compared to the motivation found amongst modders (Postigo, 2007; Poor, 2014), of wanting to enhance the game for their own, or others enjoyment. However, almost every respondent in this survey (except for the son of Tfoust10) were not expecting their suggestions to be implemented, hence the users are not motivated by the knowledge that they will alter the game but rather the hope of doing it.

Another important motivation for both playing the game, engaging in the community, and creating content for many users, was the engagement and involvement they felt. This was something which they credited both the community for, but perhaps most importantly the company and the fact that they have shown an inclusion of the players and their ideas. Several users expressed this possibility to affect the game content as something that was unique for Fortnite (at least for a while), and something that benefitted both the players (in the sense that they can be more involved in affecting the direction and content of the game)
and the developers (in the sense that they can gain a better understanding of what their audience wants by having an active communication with the players). In other words, the players felt empowered by this structure of audience participation, something that Dahlgren (2009) and Carpentier (2016) connect to the concept of engagement which is an important factor of participation in sociological approaches. Interestingly, however, several respondents stated that they felt that the players and Reddit users should not have too much power in deciding what gets added or altered in the game, that Epic should not give up their own vision of the game, and that they should be careful to not only listen to one part of the player base (for example the Reddit forum) since this only is only representative of how a small part of all the players feel about the game. This suggests that the users are in a similar way to the users studied by Sarikakis et. al. (2017) displaying a type of "worshipping" attitude towards Epic, placing the power to make changes in their hands.

The empowerment (of being able to affect the game with suggestions) then is both something that the users enjoy and which seems to make out an essential part of the success (at least for the respondents) of the game, and an important factor as to why they are engaged in the game at all. Factors that affect the perceived empowerment of users (Füller, 2010) that can be connected to these results are the high level of enjoyment that many users are experiencing, as well as the enjoyment of creating suggestions and the creativity of the users. Simultaneously as enjoying this, the users do not want the influence or empowerment of the players to be too big, Epic should be able to follow their vision of how the game should work. Some other interesting thoughts connected to the issue of empowerment were added by Tursuboi and iBolts who suggested that Epic could alter their method for adding suggestion (at least cosmetic ones, such as skins) and incorporate a system where users can vote in polls for what content they want to be added, and also receive credit or compensation for their suggestions. This suggests that these users want more empowerment in terms of democracy and deciding what content gets added, as well as perhaps maintaining a larger ownership of their created content (with the addition of a system that credits and/or compensates the contributor).

The hope of getting a suggestion added to the game, and the hope of being contacted by Epic, as well as credited (if not by the company, then at least by the community) suggests that the users strive towards becoming a part of the game and the company (at least a small part, by the addition of their suggestions). Several respondents expressed that to actually having created something that is in the game is something unique and something to be proud of. This motivation of having a small part of yourself (in the form of your suggestions) in the game, is
related to prosumption (Dusi, 2018; Örnebring, 2008; Ritzer and Jurgenson, 2010; Zwick et. al., 2008) - the player wants to be (and is) both the consumer of the game and the producer of game content.

One opinion that was clearly expressed by the majority of the users is the slight disappointment in the lack of communication between the players and the developers. The results showed that such disappointment was especially common for users who had had their suggestions added to the game, but had had little to no contact with Epic. Other users who had not had their content added also expressed that they felt that Epic should contact the users whose suggestions they are adding. Most users who had had their content added to the game, felt that they would have liked to receive a message from Epic where they thanked the users for the content, this was for many more important than receiving credit in the game. As previously mentioned, several users also felt that Epic should improve their contact with players outside the Reddit forum. The need for Epic to improve their communication was one of the most commonly mentioned statements from the respondents, and this indicates that if Epic continues the use of user generated content, then they may need to work on improving this factor, in order to maintain a good relationship with the users. The suggestions from Tursuboi and iBolts about changing the system of how suggestions are added would be a way to create a more democratic and transparent way of adding user generated content. The results also showed that there is an unclear approach from Epic, as to what users are contacted. For the users, this may be regarded as an undemocratic approach to using user generated content, and may potentially be harmful for Epic if continued.

### 7.2 Ownership and prosumption

The results showed motivations amongst the users of wanting to be part of the game and the company - something that we can connect to the theories on prosumption, in the sense that the user is both consumer and producer of the game content. On the one hand, the respondents embraced the empowerment given to them with the ability to affect the game content, in some cases however they were worried about Epic listening too much to the players or listening too much to a certain group of players (the ones on the Reddit forum). While Jenkins (2008) seems to be of the opinion that it is not possible for everyone to participate in participatory culture Fuchs (2014a) describes how such a statement normalizes the exclusion of certain people. There may be truth in both of these statements, but then the question is how to minimize the exclusion of certain groups. It is clear that the respondents think that the
focus on the Reddit forum (and some other social media platforms, such as Twitter, and Youtube) gives a false picture of what all of the players of Fortnite actually think and want. The fact that the users are aware of this issue is perhaps a sign that something needs to be done to include a broader group of players. The empowerment of being able to affect the game content, is only valid for a small portion of the players, hence only the players using Reddit or other social media channels monitored by Epic are empowered and prosumers.

Fuchs (2014a) also describes how ownership is fundamental for the empowerment, and he asks if a user (or prosumer) can truly be empowered if he or she does not have full ownership of the content that they contribute. The results of this study clearly show indications that the users are to some degree concerned about the ownership of their content. In most of the cases, this means that they want (or would prefer to) be given credit if Epic were to use their content (or at least be contacted and thanked by the company). In other cases, users express how they would have wanted to be compensated (or at least be given the same treatment as other users whose content have been used). Similar to the findings by Sarikakis et. al (2017) the users seemed to regard the ownership of the suggestions as belonging more to Epic than to themselves. However, several users state that they do not want other users to take credit for their work, hence there is (for some users) a hierarchy in the perceived ownership of the suggestions where the user who has created it, has a larger ownership than other users but a lower one than Epic. This perception of hierarchy in the ownership was the most common amongst the respondents; however some users had a stronger or weaker sense of ownership of their suggestions.

While Örnebring (2008) describes two types of prosumption - production (consumers creating for own use, but where the product can be consumed by others) and customization (small contributions such as votes or comments, where the production process is mainly controlled by another force), it could be argued that the prosumption observed in the Fortnite Reddit forum is a combination of these two types. The users are motivated to create suggestions both for their own enjoyment but also for the enjoyment of the community. Many respondents were very engaged in the game and community, which according to Örnebring (2008) is associated with production prosumers. However, the production process and which suggestion gets added to the game is controlled by Epic, which is something that Örnebring associates with customization.

As Ritzer & Jurgenson (2010) describe, prosumption as a form of capitalism has a characteristic of offering products and content for free, and prosumers seem to enjoy doing work that was previously done by paid employees. Several respondents discussed some of the
reasons why *Fortnite* has been so successful and users argue that one main reason for this was the fact that *Fortnite: Battle Royale* was free to play and accessible on plenty of different platforms. While *Fortnite* is free to play, it relies on players purchasing items from the shop. An interesting example of how *Fortnite* capitalises on the suggestions from the users is of course how even the users who have created a skin concept which gets added to the game have to purchase it themselves. This was the case for all users who had had content added to the game (except for cases where the content was free for everyone. In other words, the goods produced by the users are sold back to them in a way very similar to the system described in Marxist theories). The difference here is that the users are not hired and in most cases not paid in any way to produce the goods. The users (in Marxists terms - the *proletariat*) create the goods voluntarily and for free, and the company (in Marxists terms: *the bourgeoisie*) then sells the good to the same users, profiting from the voluntarily work of the users. As Ritzer & Jurgenson (2010) note, a consumer creating goods for a company creates "*nothing but surplus value*". It is important to note here that although the users may actually lose money by creating suggestions, they may profit from this prosumer structure in other ways. Observed in the data results is an overall positive feeling amongst the users of being able to affect the content in the game, a feeling of empowerment and freedom. The feeling of having created something that is implemented in the game, also seems to be a valuable aspect for the users, which can be connected to the empowerment and feeling of being "seen", even if the users are not credited by the company. The empowerment and freedom that prosumption may lead to is something noted by Zwick et al (2008) as a positive aspect of the prosumer system. The users are creating value for themselves in terms of freedom and empowerment, while Epic profits economically from their voluntarily labour.

Although this thesis argues that the users in the *Fortnite* Reddit forum are indeed prosumers, it is not clear whether or not they perceive themselves as such. They clearly understand that there is a possibility for their content to be implemented into the game, however their view on ownership (where Epic is the highest in the hierarchy) suggests that they do not view their suggestions as goods that have an economic value (until it is accepted by Epic), rather they are motivated by the community feedback, the creative outlet, and the hope of it getting added to the game. Several respondents have a relaxed view on the ownership of their content, and they mostly agree that Epic can use the content in any way they want. Of course, users can regard themselves as prosumers even without the vision of economic value for their content, and indeed as Ritzer & Jurgenson (2010) note, the users are in fact seemingly enjoying the voluntarily work, there may however exist a false consciousness.
within the users, where they regard their role not as prosumers but rather as consumers with the possibility to create something that gets added to the game. Important to note is that Epic is completely in control of what user generated content that gets added, which differs from other forms of prosumerism where users are able to directly affect a product (for example modders).

Although I only collected answers from a small part of the *Fortnite* community, several users expressed some degree of concerns about the compensation of the users whose suggestions were implemented into the game. Informant 1 brought up some interesting thoughts about the compensations of users who have had their suggestions added to the game, and while his focus was not entirely on compensation for every user whose suggestions got added to the game, he was concerned about the inequality in compensation for the different users. According to Informant 1 some users were confirmed as having been compensated by Epic, and while I cannot speculate on whether or not this statement is true, Informant 1 was of the opinion that if some users were compensated then all should be (who had their suggestions added to the game). Another user stated that if he had created a skin suggestion (or something that required more amount of effort to create) he would have wanted to not only be credited, but receive compensation for the work if it was added to the game. The responses from these users indicate that there are concerns about the compensation of the users, which perhaps needs to be addressed by Epic in order to maintain a good relationship with the player base. The responses also indicate that these users are more aware of their role as producers and the profit they create for Epic when creating content that gets added to the game. It is clear that there is a difference in the degree of awareness of the value of the goods that the users are creating.

In terms of the copyright of the suggestions on the *Fortnite* sub-Reddit many users expressed a similar attitude as displayed by the users studied by Sarikakis et. al. (2017); they thought that Epic had the right to use the content created, but simultaneously considered it somewhat important to protect themselves from other users "stealing" their suggestions. It is somewhat unclear to what extent the user agreements set by Epic apply. In this study there was only one case where a user stated that he had an agreement with Epic. This would suggest that although Epic states in the user agreements that they can use any "fan made content", they still have made agreements in order to protect themselves from getting sued. The "fair use" law is also an interesting aspect of user generated content and prosumer systems. The suggestions of the *Fortnite* sub-Reddit cannot really be considered to have a commercial aim for the users, and it is difficult to see how the "effect of the use upon the
potential market for or value of the copyrighted work" could be in any way harmful for Epic. In some cases "the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole", may be a point of consideration. Epic did not compensate or make agreements with the users who had used assets that were already in the game when creating their suggestions. On the other hand, as Informant 1 notes another user who had made a suggestion with the use of the character models seemed to have made an agreement with Epic. Since I have not interviewed this particular user, I cannot speculate on the truthfulness of this claim, however if this was the case, the boundary of what can be considered content based off of Epics assets or original content seems to be hard to distinguish. The fact that Epic has made agreements with some users and not others may be based on the "originality” of the created content, but it seems unclear what Epic considers as an "original" suggestion.

7.3 The values of voluntarily labour

The exploitation of labour (Fuchs, 2014b; Terranova, 2013), can present itself in different shapes, and while the labour of the forum users examined in this thesis is of a voluntary nature, it still gives rise to questions about ethics and morals. Epic do not only display a doubtful approach to their communication with the users (some users get more value out of the suggestions than others), but also takes user generated content for free and sells it back to the users who have created it, creating surplus value (Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010), for the company. The reason that this works, seems to be dependent on the presumption that Epic does this solemnly to please the players by adding their content to the game, and not for the profit. Indeed, the users interviewed in this thesis do not seem to mind buying the skin, even though they would perhaps preferred to get if for free. Skins created on Reddit also tend to get a lot of attention when they are added to the game, presumably leading to more purchases of the skin. There is a moral dilemma in whether or not Epic is the "good guy" by listening to the players and incorporating their ideas, or the villain who profits on the voluntarily labour of the users. Of course there is value in the participation for the players as well (Jenkins, 2006) they can get their content added to the game, get credit, or even enter into an agreement with Epic. But the fact remain that there is an unequal distribution of the value that the players get back, something that seems to bother some of the users interviewed in this thesis.
7.4 Summary and conclusions

The goal of this thesis was to investigate the motivations for users in the *Fortnite: Battle Royale* community on Reddit for creating suggestions that may or may not be added to the game. Furthermore, the thesis has aimed towards a comprehension of how the users view issues related to the intellectual property of the suggestions, as well as a better understanding of the communication between the players and the game developers and what benefits and/or disadvantages a close relationship between these two parts have on both the players and the developers. The data was collected by the use of a convenience selection and the users could choose to participate in an interview or by answering questions in a form.

The results showed that motivations among the players were focused on the hopes of getting the suggestions added to the game and in those terms affect the game content, the feedback they could get from the community, the creative outlet that they got from creating the suggestions, the possibility to practice their skill for future job opportunities, as well as the possibility for them to be contacted and credited by Epic. The users' positive attitudes towards the possibility of affecting the game content, was in the discussion related to the empowerment that their role as prosumers gave.

The analysis and discussion has highlighted both positive and negative effects of the user participation, for both the players and the company. Overall, the users expressed positive opinions about the possibility to affect the content of the game, and most users regarded Epic's addition of the suggestions as a positive thing. A main concern among the users was the lack of communication from Epic's side, and the fact that some users whose suggestions were implemented into the game were not credited or thanked by Epic, while others were. Users were also concerned about the democratic structure of the Reddit forum, stating for example that the players on Reddit only make out a small portion of the player base and that Epic needs to consider the opinions of players outside of this forum as well.

Although most respondents did not think that users should receive payments for their suggestions, some disagreed with this, which shows that there is a divide in the community in the perception of the value and intellectual property of the suggestions. The discussion problematised the fact that Epic profits from the voluntarily made suggestions by selling the content back to the users who have created it, however this did not seem to be a main concern among the respondents.

The thesis has connected to the issues of copyright and morality, which are two complex factors in relation to user generated content, and the ways in which companies use this. The
legality and morality of companies using user generated company is not always clear, and while this thesis contributes to the body of knowledge around the users perceptions on these factors, further research needs to be made into the relationship between the users and the companies. This thesis did not explore the reasoning behind Epic's choices to credit or enter into agreements with some users. This is something that further research could benefit from investigating, in order to gain a deeper understanding of social and/or power structures in the relationship between the players and the developers. A relationship that this thesis has argued differs from previous forms of player/developer relationship in the digital games industry, and one which seems to have affected users in new ways. Examining the perceptions of these issues from the views of Epic employees, and connecting their experiences with the experiences of the users, using for example social network analysis, would help contribute to the knowledge about the relationship between users and organisations in relation to user generated content, a relationship that is present in media environments outside the gaming industry. Another subject for further research that was not explored in this thesis is the view on ownership and intellectual property in relation to the age of the users. For example, Informant 1 (age 31) clearly expressed more concerns about this issue that Informant 2 (age 16).

The discussion has suggested that if Epic should continue to use the suggestions created by the players, they need to improve their communication with the players and broaden it to include players outside of the Reddit forum. The lack of contact or credit for some users whose suggestions have been added, and the fact that other users have been contacted and entered into agreements with Epic shows a doubtful approach from Epic's side when it comes to the views on ownership and intellectual property. For some reason, some users receive better deals than others, and should this continue it may be harmful for the company. The positive benefits for both the players and the company suggests that the incorporation of user generated content will continue to be a big part of the digital game industry, however new systems that facilitate democracy and transparency for the users may be necessary for this approach to be beneficial for both parts.
References


cruz-president-campaign-facebook-user-data


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Appendix A - Interview questions

Questions for users whose suggestions made it into the game

1. What do you enjoy about creating suggestions for the Fortnite forum?
   - Why do you do it? (To get feedback from community? To get it into the game?...)
   - What would be the best thing that could happen to one of your suggestions after you've uploaded it to the Fortnite subReddit (r/FortNiteBR)?

2. Do you agree to the statement that Epic often considers the suggestions and ideas of players?
   - Is there anything that you think could be improved in terms of the contact between the players and developers?
   - What do you think the benefits and/or disadvantages are in the close relationship between the developers and the players?

3. Do you consider it important to watermark or in other ways mark your suggestions as yours before you upload them?
   - Why? /Why not?
   - Do you think Epic has the right to use content uploaded under the tag "suggestions" in any way they want?
   - Why?/Why not?

4. Were you in contact with Epic in any way before (or after) the introduction of your suggestion into the game?
   - If so: How did they contact you? What did they say? Did they ask you whether or not they could use your suggestion in the game?
   - If not: Would you have wanted to be contacted before they used your suggestion? Why? Why not?

5. Did you receive any compensation from Epic in relation to their use of your suggestion?
   - Do you think you should have? Why? Why not?
- What was your reaction when you knew that your suggestion would be/was added to the game?

**Questions for users whose suggestions did not make it into the game**

1. **What do you enjoy about creating suggestions for the *Fortnite* forum?**
   - Why do you do it? (To get feedback from community? To get it into the game?...)

   - What would be the best thing that could happen to one of your suggestions after you've uploaded it to the *Fortnite* subReddit?

2. **Do you agree to the statement that Epic often considers the suggestions and ideas of players?**
   - Is there anything that you think could be improved in terms of the contact between the players and developers?
   
   - What do you think the benefits and/or disadvantages are in the close relationship between the developers and the players?

3. **Do you consider it important to watermark or in other ways mark your suggestions as yours before you upload them?**
   - Why? / Why not?

   - Do you think Epic has the right to use content uploaded under the tag "suggestions" in any way they want?

   - Why? / Why not?

4. **Have you ever been in contact with Epic regarding your suggestions for the game?**
   - If so: How did they contact you? What did they say?

   If not: Is it your goal, or something that you only like, the idea of one day getting contacted by Epic?

   - What, do you think, would be your reaction if you found out that your suggestion would be/was added to the game?
Appendix B - Forms

Interview form

1. Age: *

Värdet måste vara ett tal

2. Gender *
   - Male
   - Female
   - Prefer not to say
   - Other

3. Nationality: (if you prefer not to say, you can write so) *

Ange ditt svar

4. Approximately for how long have you played Fortnite? (Or for how long did you play, if you are not playing anymore) *

Ange ditt svar
5. Approximately for how long have you been following or/and participating in the subreddit r/FortNiteBR? *

   Ange ditt svar

6. Have you even engaged in modding (the altering and modification of content in digital games) before? *
   - No
   - Yes
   - Annet

7. I agree that my reddit username may be used in the thesis text when referring to these answers. *
   - Yes
   - No

8. I agree that my answers to the interview and this form will be used as empirical material in a master's thesis by Maria Olsson at Malmö University. *
   - Yes
Form - in game

1. Age: *

Värdet måste vara ett tal

2. Gender *

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say
- Other

3. Nationality: (if you prefer not to say, you can write so) *

Ange ditt svar

4. Approximately for how long have you played Fortnite? (Or for how long did you play, if you are not playing anymore) *

Ange ditt svar
5. Approximately for how long have you been following or/and participating in the subreddit r/FortNiteBR? *
   Ange ditt svar

6. Have you even engaged in modding (the altering and modification of content in digital games) before? *
   - No
   - Yes
   - Annat

7. What do you enjoy about creating suggestions for the Fortnite forum? *
   Ange ditt svar

8. Why do you do it? (To get feedback from the community? To get it into the game?...) Try to think of as many reasons as you can. *
   Ange ditt svar
9. What would be the best thing that could happen to one of your suggestions after you've uploaded it to the Fortnite subreddit (r/FortNiteBR)? *

Ange cètt svar

10. Do you agree or disagree to the statement that Epic often considers the suggestions and ideas of players? *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
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11. What do you think could be improved in terms of the contact between the players and the developers? *

Ange cètt svar

12. What do you think the benefits and/or disadvantages are in having a close relationship between the developers and the players? *

Ange cètt svar
13. Do you consider it important to watermark or in other ways mark your suggestions as yours before you upload them? *

- Yes
- No
- Annet

14. Why?/Why not? *

Ange ditt svar

15. Do you think Epic has the right to use content uploaded under the tag “suggestions” in any way they want? *

- No
- Yes
- Annet

16. Why?/Why not? *

Ange ditt svar
17. Were you in contact with Epic in any way before (or after) the introduction of your suggestion into the game? *
   - Yes
   - No
   - Annat

18. If so: How did they contact you? What did they say? Did they ask you whether or not they could use your suggestion in the game? *
   If not: Would you have wanted to be contacted before they used your suggestion? Why? Why not?
   Ange till svar

19. Did you receive any compensation from Epic in relation to their use of your suggestion? *
   - Yes
   - No
   - Annat

20. Do you think you should have? Why? Why not? *
   Ange till svar
21. What was your reaction when you knew that your suggestion would be/ was added to the game?

Ange ditt svar

22. I agree that my reddit username may be used in the thesis text when referring to these answers. *
   
   - Yes
   - No

23. I agree that my answers to this form will be used as empirical material in a master's thesis by Maria Olsson at Malmo University. *
   
   - Yes
1. Age: *

Värdet måste vara ett tal

2. Gender *

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say
- Other

3. Nationality: (if you prefer not to say, you can write so) *

Ange ditt svar

4. Approximately for how long have you played Fortnite? (Or for how long did you play, if you are not playing anymore) *

Ange ditt svar
5. Approximately for how long have you been following or/and participating in the subreddit r/FortNiteBR? *

Ange ditt svar

6. Have you even engaged in modding (the altering and modification of content in digital games) before? *

  - No
  - Yes
  - Annet

7. What do you enjoy about creating suggestions for the Fortnite forum? *

Ange ditt svar

8. Why do you do it? (To get feedback from the community? To get it into the game?...) Try to think of as many reasons as you can. *

Ange ditt svar

9. What would be the best thing that could happen to one of your suggestions after you’ve uploaded it to the Fortnite subreddit (r/FortNiteBR)? *

Ange ditt svar
10. Do you agree or disagree to the statement that Epic often considers the suggestions and ideas of players? *

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. What do you think could be improved in terms of the contact between the players and the developers? *

Ange ditt svar

12. What do you think the benefits and/or disadvantages are in having a close relationship between the developers and the players? *

Ange ditt svar

13. Do you consider it important to watermark or in other ways mark your suggestions as yours before you upload them? *

- Yes
- No
- Annat
14. Why?/Why not? *

_Ange ditt svar_

15. Do you think Epic has the right to use content uploaded under the tag “suggestions” in any way they want? *

- No
- Yes
- Annat

16. Why?/Why not? *

_Ange ditt svar_

17. Have you ever been in contact with Epic regarding your suggestions for the game? *

- Yes
- No
- Annat
18. If so: How did they contact you? What did they say? *
   *If not: Is it your goal, or something that you only like, the idea of one day getting contacted by Epic?

   Ange dit svar

19. What do you think would be your reaction if you found out that your suggestion would be/was added to the game? *

   Ange dit svar

20. I agree that my reddit username may be used in the thesis text when referring to these answers. *

   ○ Yes
   ○ No

21. I agree that my answers to this form will be used as empirical material in a master’s thesis by Maria Olsson at Malmö University. *

   ○ Yes
Appendix C - Additional consent form

Consent to take part in research

Motivations and ownership in Fortnite communities - A master's thesis by Maria Olsson at Malmö University

1. Reddit username: *

   Ange ditt svar

2. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
   • I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
   • I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
   • I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
   • I understand that in any report on the results of this research my real identity will remain anonymous.
   • I understand that in any report on the results of this research my online identity will remain anonymous, unless I have agreed otherwise.
   • I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the thesis and the presentation of the thesis.
   • I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.
   • I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained until the exam board confirms the results of the thesis.
   • I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for two years from the date of the exam board.
   • I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
   • I understand that I am free to contact the person involved in the research to seek further clarification and information. *

☐ I agree