

Minecraft Theory Wiki:
A proposal to the IMS.

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This document proposes a wiki as discussed at the end of the Saturday, September 26th meeting, largely discussed between myself (Llamangus) and Turtle. At first called the ‘Minecraft Server Theory Wiki’ but shortened to ‘Minecraft Theory Wiki’ as suggested by Turtle (to cover edge cases.)

1.0 State of Minecraft (server) Theory

Through its over a decade long lifespan, it became a spaghetti-coded simple block game to a platform that captured the interest of Microsoft, urban planners, governments[1] and NGOs[2]. However, we’ve been seeing a trend of Minecraft being used as a platform for deeper conversations around urban planning, economics, and sociology. Now Minecraft is an increasingly more capable platform to be shaped and studied.

1.0.1 YouTube:

Minecraft theory as a niche on YouTube has taken a few different aspects as the game has evolved to the point that it is becoming more platform-like. Minecraft Civilizations started out as a youtube content scheme, made popular by Ish, which inspired TSE and other civ servers that have been brought to the IMS attention. The currency debate remains a decently popular topic on youtube. YouTube likely remains the best platform for search visibility on a topic basis, as most

[1] Danish Gov’t creates country in Minecraft.
https://www.gamespot.com/articles/danish-government-creates-entire-country-in-minecraft-users-promptly-blow-it-up-and-plant-american-flag/1100-6419412/
[2] Minecraft inspires crafty ways around government censorship.
https://www.cnet.com/news/politics/minecraft-inspires-crafty-way-around-government-censorship/

content is evergreen. Content is easily found and accessed thanks to channel pages and the algorithm.

1.0.2 Discord:

Discord is a better place for discussion and organization than Youtube, but using it for archives and well-connected evergreen content tends to work against how most people use discord, unless the server is specifically set up for this purpose (like the RaidFarms Historical Society Discord.)

While it's easy to participate, discord servers tend to develop a core community of active members. Discord-based spaces in this field may unintentionally become more insular, creating a large and self referential cultural body.

Drafts and PDFs can be stored via forums, but lack organization, hierarchy, or any connective tissue. Quality and impact of drafts/works on discord are variable, but many works don't make it past this stage. Tags are created to be selected rather than created by the author, which favors broader categories within forums. Active forum pages also clutter up the navbar, so most pages are meant to fade away if they lose relevance.

1.0.3 Blogs / Journals / Websites:

These work best for evergreen content, but they can still be scattered and disconnected from each other. You may still need to know what you are looking for.

1.1: Effects of these distributed efforts:

We have spaces that are wider than they are deep, and deeper than they are wide. By this, the wider space is broadly on youtube and reddit, where the most popular topics draw attention, tread new ground, and only occasionally deepen. By spaces that are deeper than they are wide, we see the creation and administration of groups on discord and minecraft servers themselves.

While cross-pollination exists (largely through the IMS investigative efforts), discord based organization structurally rewards long-term participation and deeper personal investments into an organization's knowledgebase and social dynamics, even more so for ones based around a minecraft server or civ events.

The IMS is in a unique position where it is not bound to any particular server or playerbase. Instead, in its more professional capacities, it acts both as an investigative body and a think-tank.

2.0 The Proposal

I am proposing the Minecraft [Server] Theory Wiki as a solution, with the goal of aggregating, summarizing, and connecting various aspects of the field. This would not be the same suggestion as an 'IMS Wiki' or Library, but it can include aspects of that.

2.1 Proposed Pillars of MTW

2.1.1 The Specific and the General.

The MTW would be split up into different sections for the management of its namespaces and directories. [SPEC] and [GEN]. SPEC allows us to contain Institutional Pluralism. From SPEC we divide into further categories and namespaces, and to namespaces we grant privilege to Organizations and Servers of Interest.

Examples:/SPEC/Organizations/Institute-of-Minecraft-Studies currently exists.
As well as ../IMS-History and ../IMS-Creators-Portal.
../SPEC/Servers/Minecraft-Bloodlines and ../SPEC/Servers/Raidfarms could potentially exist.

2.1.2: Institutional pluralism.

The IMS would have a unique role, but ideally it wouldn't be the only organization here. As the IMS has crossed paths with different organizations and Servers of Interest, the MTW should follow as well. The MTW shall seek out and select members of different organizations that have created their bodies of theory and observations.

2.1.3 Aggregation, Summarization, and Connection

As opposed to serving as a simple library or place to back up works, MTW should feature and connect topics together. MTW could also refer to a work as a topic in itself. Something that I've noticed in the IMS is that occasionally concepts featured within drafts (that do not get published in an official capacity, thus becoming more of an archived work on discord) will still have explanatory weight, and more prolific authors will build upon their own work. I've used 'tyranny of the unemployed' as an example for this.

The focus on topics above works should also be more approachable for readers, and a wiki page rabbit hole may be an easier initial ask than a PDF. A topic page asks 'would you like to know more?' For example, a GEN/../ currency debate portal summarizes its history, broader camps, lists pages for Wheat, Nether Stars, Deepslate Emerald Ore, etc. Wheat features a few paragraphs or a section on Raid Farms, which could laterally link to /SPEC/../Raidfarms.

2.1.4 Capacity over Expectation

Wiki entries are expected to grow and change, and MTW should be approachable for both readers and contributors. Minecraft Theory Wiki would have a greater responsibility for providing, summarizing, explaining, and sourcing, and linking topics. MTW would not need to scrutinize or editorialize. We do not need to raise the floor or editorial barrier to entry for initial entries, so long as it follows some basic principles (guidelines TBD.) For most topics a dry and

accurate summation should be sufficient, allowing works to speak for themselves. We could also include reception and criticism as a part of a page.

3.0 Where the IMS fits

The IMS has an interesting niche in the larger MT/MST space, as it's not as pinned down to a server concept or community, it *has* events, but it's both broader in scope and more specific at the same time. I've called it both a journalistic organization and a think tank, because those aspects focus on different things. The MTW wouldn't be simply 'another thing the IMS does', as I'd hope to bring MTW to other organizations that would participate. But how and why would there be an IMS-MTW relationship?

Firstly, the IMS already has organizational experience, attracts writing talent, and makes the right connections with other organizations. By being the first or one of the first organizations, the IMS may benefit MTW by providing an example for other orgs to see what's possible here. It has a body of theory to contribute to a Minecraft Theory Wiki, and would in return benefit from an encyclopedic knowledge base, both as a form of institutional memory and as an onboarding tool for new members. MTW would make connecting and referencing ideas in other works, even across organizations, easier. This could include pre-written academic citations for each 'works' page. This would also provide a service as a point of aggregation for people interested in developing Minecraft servers, plugins, and mods to see what has worked or not and why, to see and compare notes from our Servers of Interest.

The IMS would also have a greater influence in setting standards and policies it would like to see in MTW, and set an example that future contributors can see. The IMS would potentially get more visibility from MTW, if it can become the encyclopedia this field needs.

3.1 The Ask

In concrete terms, I'm asking for the following:

1. **Giving feedback on the (developing) prototype.** Tell me what does and doesn't work. The structure is still being worked out, particularly how content and namespaces should be organized in [GEN].
2. **Help shape the initial content policy and standards**, including what qualifies as a 'Server of Interest,' which is still undefined in [SPEC].
3. **Be the first participating organization**, with its own namespace under /SPEC/Organizations, and the first batch(es) of existing topics, works, and concepts.
4. **A plan or scheme on how the MTW and IMS works together.** Would this line of work be contained to the Publishing Department, a sub-department of the main branch, something else, or something floating?
5. **Shared Stewardship**, with backend and administrative access shared to others, so the project isn't dependent on any one person.

4.0 Tooling

I looked into different Wiki tools, at first by using Claude to list and compare what was available, and it came to three finalists. WikiJS, Dokuwiki, and BookStack. Wikipedia itself runs on MediaWiki, but it's older and shows its age, and has more moving parts needed to work. It was eliminated fairly early on simply because there were better options.

- Dokuwiki didn't require a database, so it would have had less moving parts, but that isn't really as big of an issue. But Dokuwiki uses flat files, which would be more portable. Namespace based permissions ('ACLs'). However it's fairly dated and barebones without plugins, and probably less responsive due to a lack of a database. A lot of features we'd get from WikiJS are implemented by plugins here, including support for WYSIWYG writing.
- Bookstack has a 'what you see is what you get (WYSIWYG)' and a markdown style text editor, where Dokuwiki uses markdown. It's the simplest of the three finalists, but also more constrained. Its hierarchical setup is easy to understand and write permissions around. Though it also seems more geared towards private/internal organizational wikis than shared community spaces.
- WikiJS carries a few different editor modes (raw text, html, markdown, and WYSIWYG.) It's more modern in appearance. It has a rule/path based permissions system. It has a comments/page discussion system. It also has the ability to sign in using Discord. It can also be backed up with git.



I initially planned on getting these finalists and presenting this doc before creating the wiki, but it still seemed like WikiJS was the smarter decision. Digital Ocean provides it with docker and postgresql out the box. Discord authentication was an easy, no brainer choice to make. It wasn't expensive to start up though I did get the MinecraftTheory.Org domain for two years.
I also figured it would be quicker to see what could work and present something people could actually see rather than run everything through committee. I took the classic route of asking for forgiveness instead of permission, hoping that at least a working prototype helps my case.

5.0 Conclusion

There's still a lot of places for Minecraft Theory as a whole to go. Breaking some of the natural/unintentional insularity of its sub-communities by creating an encyclopedia following the pillars laid out should give more momentum and outside legibility. There are still decisions to be made on the guidelines and logistics of the Minecraft Theory Wiki, but it's something I believe the IMS is particularly capable of doing.