You are being invited to take part in a research study investigating if experience playing video games has an impact on cognitive skills. Before you decide whether or not to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear, or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. The **lead researcher** for this project is **Eleanor Hyde** who is **supervised** by **Dr Claudia von Bastian**, under the **University of Sheffield**. This project has been approved by the University of Sheffield’s Ethics Review Committee, administered by the Psychology Department.

**What is the study’s purpose?**

Action video games, and especially the sub-genre First Person Shooter (FPS) games, require diverse sets of cognitive skills, such as quickly shifting attention from one task to another. Previous research has compared individuals with no video game experience to those who have played various games for a minimum amount of time. However, different games and different levels of expertise in video gaming may be associated differently with cognitive abilities. Therefore, we aim to evaluate the cognitive skills of a large sample of casual, experienced and professional gamers, who play the popular FPS game Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CS:GO).

**Why have I been chosen?**

You are being asked to take part because you responded to an advert for this study and meet all of the following criteria:

* 16-35 years old
* Proficient English for understanding the instructions and questions
* Play CS:GO, with any frequency or experience
* Access to a computer with internet connection.
* Normal or corrected-to-normal vision, including no color blindness
* No current diagnosis of neurological, psychological or psychiatric illness
* No current medication with known side-effects on cognition
* No current recreational drug use (e.g., cannabis, cocaine, or methamphetamine)

If you are not able to take part in the study because you do not meet all of the criteria, please let the researcher know. In total, we hope to recruit at least 300 participants for this experiment.

**Do I have to take part?**

It is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to sign a consent form before completing the experiment. If you have any questions about the research, you can ask the researcher at any time prior or after you completed the study (contact details are included in this document). Your data will be anonymised as soon as you complete the experiment, and if you wish to withdraw your participation you may do so at any point during the experiment by closing your browser. Once you have completed the experiment, you are able to withdraw your data up to **2 weeks** after completion date. If you wish to withdraw your participation, you do not have to give a reason and there will be no negative consequences in doing so.

**What do I have to do if I take part?**

If you do decide to take part, you will be provided with a link to a Qualtrics Survey, the first section of which provides you with this information sheet and a consent form. You will be asked to click a button to confirm that you have read and understood the information, and are willing to take part in the research. Following this, the Qualtrics Survey will link you to a different website (Tatoo, [www.tatool-web.com](http://www.tatool-web.com)) that will present a cognitive task and will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Instructions for the task are shown before you begin. Once completed, you will be provided with your unique Tatool completion code which you should copy-paste into the Qualtrics Survey. Afterwards, a short 10 minutes questionnaire will continue on Qualtrics regarding your CS:GO experience and expertise. All questions include an “I don’t know” or “I prefer not to say” if you are uncomfortable answering any of them. Once completed, you will be shown the debrief information via Qualtrics. Both Tatool and Qualtrics are browser applications which do not require you to download any software. In total, the experiment should take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

**What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

We do not anticipate any disadvantages or risks in taking part in this experiment that are greater than discussing similar topics with a friend. However, it is possible that reflecting upon your previous CS:GO experiences may cause you to feel uncomfortable or distressed. Additionally, you may find the task challenging which may cause distress. If you feel like this at any point during the experiment, or that participation in the study would impact your mental or physical health, please let the researcher know and contact your GP. You may withdraw from the experiment at any point by closing your browser.

**What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

The first 300 participants will be rewarded with £4 Amazon vouchers upon completion. If you are one of these first 300 participants and share your email address with us, you will receive the e-gift card within approximately 2-4 weeks from participation in the study. In addition, all participants (including any completing the study after the first 300 participants) can enter a prize draw for 1x £100, 1x £50, and 5x £10 prizes after conclusion of the study.

Additionally, your participation is greatly appreciated by the researchers. Your participation and valuable CS:GO experience will benefit future research into video games, by improving researcher understanding of video games and their cognitive impacts. It is the hope that by conducting novel research such as this study, that more research regarding the effects playing video games have can be conducted in the future.

**Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?**

All the information that we collect about you during the course of the experiment will be kept strictly confidential. Personal information will be kept separately from the research data, and the research data will be anonymised. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications. Anonymised data may later be made available to other researchers in accordance with the Open Science Framework, or in journal publications. Please note that you can only withdraw data **during the study** because your data will be anonymised upon completion. You can withdraw your data by closing the browser window during the cognitive task, or by not submitting the survey responses.

**What is the legal basis for processing my personal data?**

According to data protection legislation, we are required to inform you that the legal basis we are applying in order to process your personal data is that ‘*processing is necessary for the performance of a experiment carried out in the public interest*’ (Article 6(1)(e)). Further information can be found in the University’s Privacy Notice<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general>.

**Who is the Data Controller?**

The University of Sheffield will act as the Data Controller for this study. This means that the University of Sheffield is responsible for looking after your information and using it properly.

**What if something goes wrong and I wish to complain about the research?**

Should you wish to raise a complaint regarding the treatment by researchers or a serious adverse event occurring during or after the experiment that needs to be reported, you should contact the lead researcher (details below). If following this you feel that your complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction, you can contact the Head of the Psychology Department (details below) who will then escalate the complaint through the appropriate channels. If the complaint relates to handling of personal data, information about how to raise a complaint can be found in the University’s Privacy Notice:<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general>

**Contact Details**

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