

Participant Information Sheet

Project title: MTG Manabase Optimizer

Invitation paragraph

I would like to invite you to take part in user testing for my software development project. Before you decide whether to participate, I would like you to understand what this will involve for you and the purpose of your involvement. Feel free to ask me any questions.

What is the purpose of the project?

I am working to develop a “Manabase Optimizer” for the Magic the Gathering Card Game. A deckbuilder would input a decklist of non-land cards and specify which format they are building for. The software will take optional inputs from them on a range of factors, which may include deck strategy, price limits, and land cards to include and not include. The software will then produce a list of land cards that, when added to their input cards, will meet the deck size requirements of the format. These cards will be optimized based on the mana pips of the non-land card the player provided in order to maximize the likelihood that they will have access to the mana needed to play the spells in your deck on any given turn.

I am doing this for my final project towards an MSc qualification in Computer Science. Although I will be developing the software, the actual assessed deliverable will be a report documenting my development process and computational challenges that it has raised along the way, which will include references to studies such as this one which I am running to ensure I develop a functional product.

Why have I been invited to participate?

I am asking you to participate because, as a Magic: The Gathering player, you would be a potential user of this software if it were deployed as a commercial product. I would therefore value your input about what I should be considering at this early stage in development.

Do I have to take part?

Taking part in this is entirely voluntary. I will go through this sheet with you before starting the study, and am happy to answer any questions you may have. If you agree to take part, I will ask you to sign a consent form. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time for no reason while it is being run. However, as your comments and performance will be recorded anonymously, you will not be able to remove this data after the end of the study.

What will happen to me if I take part and what will I have to do?

I will call you on a messenger app of your choosing, and record our conversation locally on a voice memo. The conversation will be divided into two parts: first, a semi-structured interview, where I will ask you some questions about what you might like to see in such a project, and then take your thoughts. Second, I will present you with a “mockup”, a semi-functional html draft that resembles the proposed homepage of my web app, and conduct a “think aloud” evaluation, where I will, while providing you with minimal prompting, ask you to narrate your thoughts as you use the app. The first part could take from 10 minutes to an hour, depending on how much you are interested in talking about the matter with me, while the second will probably not take more than 5 minutes.

At some point over the next couple of weeks, once I have conducted these interviews, I will circulate a questionnaire asking people to assess the importance of various features that other people have come up with; this will follow a “Kano Questionnaire” format, where I will list features and ask you to mark whether the presence or absence of such features would be vital to any sane use of the product, positive, neutral, tolerable or outright unpleasant. This would likely take around five minutes to complete.

You may participate in as many or few of these evaluation methods as you like, and withdraw at any time.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks involved in taking part in the project?
As the data is anonymised, and the software itself is purely an aid for playing a recreational game, I do not foresee participation in this study posing any risk of discomfort or inconvenience to the participant.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

There is a chance that, should this design project go well, a completed version of the software will be released online as a deck-building tool. If so, you will be very welcome to use it for your own decks.

Will my participation in this project be kept confidential?

Regarding the interview, your data will be collected via an audio recording app on my smartphone. It will be kept as a saved file for a period not longer than 24 hours, and neither the contents nor the name of this sound file will contain any identifying details about you. During the 24 hours after the study, I will aggregate all data collected from all participants in this session anonymously, and classify individual comments made as positive or negative feedback, without grouping them together by individual. After this, I will delete the audio files. At no point during this process will you be identified by name, contact detail, or visually.

The survey will be conducted anonymously, and all results will be similarly anonymised.

While my project is written, this anonymised data will be stored on my personal OneDrive account in my notes, and will be deleted at the end of the project. The final draft of my project will remain in that folder, and will also be kept by the University of Bristol. Both myself and that organization may choose to share it with others.

What will happen to the results of the research project?

Your anonymised comments may or may not be referenced in the Project Report that I write over the summer of 2025. This will be submitted as the final project of my degree, comprising 60 credits of a MSc in Computer Science. I do not currently intend to publish any of my work. Should I launch a version of the completed software after graduation, this will not contain any reference to this study in its documentation.

Participants are welcome to contact me to ask for a copy of my dissertation on its completion.

Who is organising and funding the research?

This research is overseen by the School of Computer Science of the University of Bristol. It being done as part of the Conversion Masters in Computer Science MSc.

Who has reviewed the study?

The work will be reviewed by John Lapinskas, who is a Senior Lecturer in the University of Bristol School of Computer Science.

Further information and contact details

Should you wish to contact me with any further questions, I can be reached:

By telephone or WhatsApp – 07955258430

By email – zs24945@bristol.ac.uk

On Discord – LeahUnknowing

If you have any concerns related to your participation in this study beyond what I am able to answer, please contact the University of Bristol's Research Governance team at: research-governance@bristol.ac.uk