

ENCYCLOPÆDIA·MVNDI

Tianyu Ge

Thesis Showcase: 28 April, 2021 (Wed) at 12 PM – 30 April, 2021 (Fri) at 12 PM
Defense: 5 May, 2021 (Wed) at 1 PM (both EDT; UTC -4)

Thank you for your interest in the showcase of Encyclopaedia Mundi, an interactive experience in form of a software that is purported to be a 90s digital encyclopaedia.

During the showcase, there are two ways to interact with Encyclopaedia Mundi:

Download a Windows executable

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Q-89YEQ7iHXr-poLBG71-03noJjsZQLa>

This option requires a computer running Windows 10.

Or

Schedule a 15-minute remote desktop session with me

<https://calendar.google.com/calendar/selfsched?sstoken=UUR0aHJpNXMtVnpnfGRIZmF1bHR8ZDg2NDU5NzgwMGE4OTg0MTc2YzViYzFIMWFmOTIyMGI>

This option requires a computer with a modern web browser. You may also be asked by Google to sign in before you can request an appointment.

The signup will have a 20-minute block; however, the 15-minute time limit will be observed if someone has booked a slot immediately following yours. Thank you for being courteous to others and signing up for only one slot. Please also give me at least an hour of prior notice.

An email will be sent to you when the schedule is coming up (+/- 2 minutes) with a link to the remote desktop service, access code, and instructions.

Alternatively, for a non-interactive experience:

Watch a prerecorded video

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1zfV914heMxF9wmkd77a7Ecf2_Catdv5N

Defense will be streamed on Zoom: <https://viriniatech.zoom.us/j/84592288700>

Thanks again for taking time to check out my thesis project! If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at tianyu@vt.edu.

Best,

Tianyu Ge

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Upon opening Encyclopaedia Mundi, I'm receiving an error message on "CRC Fault".

A: This actually indicates that the application cannot connect to my server. As a result, you will not be able to search for any article, but preloaded content (anything on the sidebar except for Random Article, and menu bar items) will remain available.

It is possible that the server is experiencing problems if your internet connection is working. Please check this page for server status updates: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1POwZw7SzdWh8WLFWhnL7YCJfCt-OjGOC9EWLj2IEWLw>. Please send an email to tianyu@vt.edu if the server status is up and you're experiencing this problem.

(FYI, CRC is an actual operation performed to ensure data is not corrupted. Head over to [Wikipedia](#) for a proper explanation, or better yet, look up 'cyclic redundancy check' in Encyclopaedia Mundi.)

Q: I have signed up for the Encyclopaedia Mundi remote desktop on Google Calendar. What should I expect?

A: I will send you an email when your appointment is coming up (+/- 2 minutes) with your link to the website where you can access the remote desktop and an access code.

The access code will expire within 5 minutes of generation: as long as you start the session before it expires, you'll be able to continue your interaction. A second email with a new access code will be sent to you if you won't be able to start the session within the 5-minute limit.

No need to feel obliged to use up all 15 minutes! Feel free to take off whenever you want. The 15-minute limit will be observed if someone has booked a session immediately following yours.

As the remote session is one-way (I won't be able to hear or see you or your computer), you can use the notepad on the remote desktop if you have any questions requiring immediate attention.

Q: I chose to download Encyclopaedia Mundi and I'm done with the experience. What should I do?

A: Encyclopaedia Mundi does not install itself to your computer; the temporary files it generates will be fully removed once you close the application. To remove Encyclopaedia Mundi from your computer, quit the application, then delete the executable file (Encyclopaedia Mundi 0.618.0.exe) from the folder where it resides.

Q: Does this actually run on Windows 98?

A: Nooooope! Theoretically it will run on Windows 7 but YMMV.

Transparency Statement

Thank you for your interest in Encyclopaedia Mundi. Your participation in this project is voluntary. This section aims to provide you with detailed information so that you can make a more informed decision on if and how you may want to experience it.

Interactive Experience of Encyclopaedia Mundi

	Windows Executable	Remote Desktop
Minimum Requirement	* Computer capable of running Windows 10 (native, or through a virtual machine); * Internet connectivity.	* Computer with modern web browser, signed in with a Google account; * Internet connectivity.
Cleanup	Close Encyclopaedia Mundi, then delete the executable file.	Close the browser tab/window that contains the remote desktop.

Content Warning

This project utilises a version of GPT-2. The model card for GPT-2 can be found [here](#).

Excerpt from the model card:

“Because large-scale language models like GPT-2 do not distinguish fact from fiction, we don’t support use-cases that require the generated text to be true.

“Additionally, language models like GPT-2 reflect the biases inherent to the systems they were trained on, so we do not recommend that they be deployed into systems that interact with humans unless the deployers first carry out a study of biases relevant to the intended use-case. We found no statistically significant difference in gender, race, and religious bias probes between 774M and 1.5B, implying all versions of GPT-2 should be approached with similar levels of caution around use cases that are sensitive to biases around human attributes.”

Information Collected

You may be asked to provide your email address in order to schedule a remote desktop session to interact with this project. Your email will only be used within the scope of this project (setting up the remote desktop session) and will not be shared.

Encyclopaedia Mundi does not keep track of your search term. However, your IP address and time of search may be stored in a log file on the server for the duration of the thesis project showcase. This is done for diagnosis purposes and the log files will never be shared. Along with the virtual machine that the server runs on, the log files will be deleted after the thesis project showcase is concluded.

While this project does not collect your information, the third-party services utilised by this project may have different policies. Please review Google [Terms of Service](#) and Google [Privacy Policy](#).