



## INDIANA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Bloomington

Dear parents and guardians,

We are pleased to invite your child to participate in the Quest Atlantis Project. Quest Atlantis is an innovative computer program sponsored by Indiana University and approved for use in your child's school. Quest Atlantis strives to use technology to involve children in meaningful learning experiences – experiences where they might solve educational computer game challenges, called Quests. Completing Quests requires that your child participate in real-world, socially and academically meaningful activities, such as conducting environmental studies, researching other cultures, calculating frequency distributions, analyzing newspaper articles, interviewing community members, and developing action plans. Our hope is that through these experiences children will not only learn to use technology, but develop academic and important 21<sup>st</sup> century literacy and communication skills as well.

In the Quest Atlantis program, your child will not only be using commercially available educational software packages, but he or she will also build web pages that will be placed online. As a result, your child will spend time online (using the Internet) participating in Quest Atlantis. All teachers using Quest Atlantis are provided with guidelines and structures that will help them promote online safety for your child. Additionally, our virtual environment is password protected and monitored to ensure that it is safe and secure.

As a part of our project development, we may be observing your child interacting at the school and in the Quest Atlantis space. If we observe your child's class, a member of our team will be taking notes on how children use the technology, and possibly interviewing them about their experiences in the program. Some of these observations and interviews may be videotaped so that we can better understand and improve the program. However, participating in Quest Atlantis is completely voluntary. Your child does not have to participate in Quest Atlantis. Further, if your child does choose to participate in Quest Atlantis, he or she is free to withdraw from the program at any time without penalty. However, we hope that you will choose to participate in this most exciting project.

We are looking forward to working with you and your child through the Quest Atlantis program. We are confident that participating in Quest Atlantis will provide your child with valuable experience using technology to participate in meaningful learning activities. At the same time, your child's participation will help us understand how children learn with technology and how to design meaningful and engaging learning experiences.

Please read and sign the enclosed consent form. This signed form must be returned in order for your child to participate. If you have any questions about any aspects of this program, please don't hesitate to call me, Dr. Sasha Barab, the project director, at 812-856-1551.

Sincerely,

Sasha A. Barab, Professor, Indiana University  
Learning Sciences, Instructional Systems Technology & Cognitive Science  
School of Education Ph: (812) 856-1551  
Eigenmann Hall Fax: (812) 856-0862  
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Bloomington, IN 47406

**INDIANA UNIVERSITY BLOOMINGTON**

**INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT**

**Quest Atlantis**

Your child is invited to participate in a research study of learning and teaching project that uses an online, computer-based environment to engage children in educational tasks. Your child was selected as a possible participant because your child's teacher or a member of your school or center's administration requested to use the program. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

The study is being conducted by Dr. Sasha Barab, a professor of Learning Sciences at Indiana University's Center for Research on Learning and Technology. This work has been funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the National Science Foundation, NASA, the National Parks Service and other sponsors.

**STUDY PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this study is to learn about the program's effectiveness for supporting academic learning and understanding how engaging children in a narratively-rich game-based environment can affect a child's enjoyment of and participation in the learning process.

**NUMBER OF PEOPLE TAKING PART IN THE STUDY:**

If you agree to participate, your child will be one of up to 75,000 participants worldwide who will be involved in this research.

**PROCEDURES FOR THE STUDY:**

If you agree to be in the study, your child will be using the Quest Atlantis program. Quest Atlantis strives to use technology to involve children in meaningful learning experiences – experiences where they solve educational challenges called Quests. Completing Quests requires that your child participate in real-world, socially and academically meaningful activities, such as conducting environmental studies, researching other cultures, calculating frequency distributions, analyzing newspaper articles, interviewing community members, and developing action plans. Our experience is that through these activities, children will not only learn to use technology, but will also develop academic and 21<sup>st</sup> century new media literacy and communication skills as well.

As a part of our project development, we will be observing children interacting at their school or in an after-school program and in the online Quest Atlantis space. All interactions in the online space are recorded by the computer and saved as part of our database. Our team may also be taking notes on how children use the technology, and possibly interviewing students or teachers about their experiences in the program. Interviews will last from 15 to 30 minutes. Information from these observations and interviews, as well as the computerized records of their participation in the online space will be entered into a password-protected database. Observations and interviews may be audio or video taped so that researchers can analyze data more closely. We also may make copies of materials that your child produces in the Quest Atlantis space.

Your child is free to participate in this study as much or as little as he or she chooses. He or she may withdraw at any time without any penalty. Typically, your child might spend 40 minutes a session interacting with the program, with the number of sessions being determined by your child's teacher or

staff member. Your child may participate in this study for one year or for several years, depending on your willingness to participate. Participation in this program is strictly voluntary. If you or your child chooses not to participate or to withdraw from this study, he or she will not be audio or video taped, and his/her data will not be analyzed.

**RISKS OF TAKING PART IN THE STUDY:**

Although we do not anticipate any risks associated with your child taking part of the study, it is possible that, because of the interactive nature of the game, children may witness or be the recipient of teasing, mean-spirited exchanges or inappropriate language. In addition, despite our best efforts, there is a risk of losing confidentiality.

To reduce these risks, we take a variety of precautions to prevent the loss of confidentiality. All records are kept either in a password-protected database or in locked drawers. (see the Confidentiality section below for more details). Further, we hold students to a strict code of conduct which instructs students not to share personal information.

All interactions in the game are captured and diligently monitored by our staff to document and act upon any potentially problematic situations. Children and teachers can also easily report any problems they encounter within the game. A team member will share problematic exchanges with a child's teacher, and children who repeatedly violate our code of conduct can and will be denied access to the game.

**BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THE STUDY:**

The benefits to participation that are reasonable to expect are:

- Children will have an opportunity to learn disciplinary content in a engaging and personally meaningful context;
- Children may learn 21<sup>st</sup> century new media literacy skills as they interact with children from around the globe;
- Children will have the opportunity to interact with others worldwide in a protected virtual environment;
- Children may come to appreciate the value of school and education for solving real-world problems;
- Children will gain interdisciplinary experiences applying content and skills associated with multiple disciplines;
- children may develop a new sense of purpose as individuals, as members of their community, and as knowledgeable citizens of the world; and/or
- Children will come to see themselves as having important ideas to contribute to the well-being of the world.

**ALTERNATIVES TO TAKING PART IN THE STUDY:**

If your child chooses not to be a part of the study, his or her classroom teacher can accommodate their learning in a variety of ways. Teachers and staff members around the globe can create different kinds of experiences to serve as alternatives to participation in this project. Each of these is determined at the local level and therefore, up to staff and teachers in the setting in which your child participates. Additionally, parents may request a modified form of consent from teachers which allows children to participate fully but not have audio or videotaped data collected about their participation.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:**

Protecting your child's confidentiality is extremely important to us. The online space is password protected so that only registered users with a password are in the online space. Every effort will be made to keep your personal information confidential. We cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. Your personal information may be disclosed if required by law. Your identity will be held in confidence in reports in which the study may be published. In any reports of this research, there will be no mention of your child by name or the name of his or her school or after-school program. All computerized records of their work, emails, or chat will be sanitized so that in the reporting of the data your child will not be identifiable. Confidentiality will be maintained in all reports of this study. Further, all data will be kept in a locked place. All identifying marks will be removed from the data and pseudonyms will be used in any and all reporting of the data. Any tapes or materials will be destroyed at the end of the project, or within three years, whichever comes first.

Organizations that may inspect and/or copy your research records for quality assurance and data analysis include groups such as the study investigator and his/her research associates, the IUB Institutional Review Board or its designees, and (as allowed by law) state or federal agencies, specifically the Office for Human Research Protections.

**COSTS:**

Taking part in this study should not lead to added costs to you. Some participants have computers at home or use library computers for additional access, but this is not a required element of the program. Occasionally, additional project associated resources might be made available for download or purchase by your child's school, but this is strictly voluntary and not a required element of participation.

**PAYMENT:**

Neither you nor your child will receive payment for taking part in this study.

**CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS:**

For questions about the study or a research-related injury, contact the researcher Dr. Sasha Barab at 812-856-1551.

For questions about your rights as a research participant or to discuss problems, complaints or concerns about a research study, or to obtain information, or offer input, contact the IUB Human Subjects office, 530 E Kirkwood Ave, Carmichael Center, L03, Bloomington IN 47408, 812-855-3067 or by email at [iub\\_hsc@indiana.edu](mailto:iub_hsc@indiana.edu)

**VOLUNTARY NATURE OF STUDY:**

Taking part in this study is voluntary. Your child may choose not to take part or may leave the study at any time. Leaving the study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your current or future relations with the investigator(s).

**PARTICIPANT'S CONSENT**

In consideration of all of the above, I give my consent for my child to participate in this research study.

I may request a copy of this informed consent document to keep for my records. I agree to take part in this study.

Printed Name of Parent: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Child: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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**SCHOOL/OFFICE USE ONLY**

Name of Current Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Country: \_\_\_\_\_

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IRB Approval Date: <u>FEB 27, 2010</u>
Expiration Date <u>FEB 26, 2011</u>
IUB Institutional Review Board (IRB)