

# MMOS

2016 Nominet Trust 100 Winner

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2016

## **GAMERS COLLABORATE TO SOLVE SCIENCE PROBLEMS**

Project URL: <http://mmos.ch/>

Project Twitter: [@the\\_MMOS](https://twitter.com/the_MMOS)

- Digital Engagement
- Audiovisual
- Data
- Internet

We spend billions of hours playing online games. World of Warcraft gamers alone have collectively spent over six million years playing the game to date.

The challenge for gamers is how to translate the endless hours of labour they put into gaming, to real-world problems. It's a thought that occupied the minds of a Hungarian web entrepreneur Attila Szantner and his friend, a Swiss physicist Bernard Revaz. In 2014, the pair founded Massively Multiplayer Online Science (MMOS), which connects game makers with scientists to solve real scientific conundrums.

The company's first effort is Project Discovery, where they connected a popular space fantasy game EVE Online with Swedish scientists working on Human Protein Atlas (HPA) – a project that catalogues proteins and the genes that encode them to better understand how proteins interact with a range of diseases.

HPA work has been integrated into EVE Online, so players can take part. They first look at microscope pictures of cells, and are then asked to categorise different patterns within them so they can be linked to proteins. The work can be done after elementary in-game training, and while simple, cannot be done by computers because of visual pattern recognition required – the same principle that governs 'captcha' authentication systems. There's no obligation for players to take part, but if they do, they get rewards with in-game currency.

EVE Online has over 500,000 subscribers, more than 100,000 of whom opted to take part in Project Discovery. Some players were so caught up in the task that they reported playing for 15 hours straight. And while CCP – the game's design studio – estimated that it would take players three months to process the MMOS data, it took them only two weeks.

Szantner and Revaz now hope to expand their partnerships to a wider range of games. Find out more at <http://mmos.ch>

*Image courtesy of Barbara Dieu*

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