

In Mem(e)ory of Uuugggg: Mod-Users' use of *RimWorld's* Steam Workshop as a Memorial Site

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This abstract presents an emergent phenomenon of parasocial grief (Wullenkord & Brüggeshemke, 2025) through contextual framing of the meme “o7” in the Steam community surrounding the single-player game *RimWorld* (Ludeon Studios, 2018). The case presented here offers an insight into how mod-users mourn and commemorate a modder’s passing, indicating parasocial relationships that have otherwise remained hidden, but which are exposed in the expression of parasocial grief. Parasocial Grief describes the sense of loss experienced when a parasocial relationship ends, in some cases leading to the creation of memorial sites on social media (Sanderson & Hope Cheong, 2010). Modding in games communities has been researched from a variety of angles, such as pro- and antisocial perceptions (Curtis et al., 2022), modding as a cultural, creative, and communal space (Sihvonen, 2021), and as collaborative practices (Sotamaa, 2010) to name but a few. Yet mod-users’ reflections on the loss of a modder and what such indicate in terms of intersections of play and parasocial relations within a single-player game community are unclear from the current literature.

RimWorld is a sci-fi colony simulation/survival game in which the player manages a small colony of “pawns” in their journey to escape a planet. The game has a highly active modding community with just over 20.000 mods tagged as functional for the current 1.6 version of the game. With DLC releases features are often introduced to the game which mods were otherwise providing, making the mod obsolete. In these instances, there is a phenomenon on the Steam Workshop where players salute the mod with “o7”. In its mimetic simplicity, the “o” represents a head, while the “7” represents an arm doing a military salute. “o7” is an old form of player communication mainly seen in Sci-fi multiplayer games such as *Eve Online* (CCP Games, 2003) and *Star Citizen* (Cloud Imperium Games, 2017). While the meaning of “o7” is highly contextual in MMOs, ranging from “hello” and “goodbye” to “GG” and even grieving in PvP contexts, it serves a different purpose on the Steam Workshop of thanking the mod and the modder for their contribution at the end of a mod’s lifecycle.

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On the 11th of June 2025 the features for the new DLC, *RimWorld – Odyssey* (Ludeon Studios, 2025) were announced. A particular feature seemed to replace a longstanding and popular mod called “Replace Stuff” (with over 1 million subscribers) made by the modder “Uuugggg”. On the mod page, Steam users started posting o7, thanking the mod and Uuugggg for their service. Uuugggg responded on the 11th of June that the mod would not become obsolete with the new DLC and that he would continue to update it. While reducing in frequency, about 150 users saluted the mod up until the 23rd of June, where users instead started asking if the mod would be updated for the new game version.

Uuugggg, also known as AlexTD, passed away unexpectedly on the 29th of June 2025. This news was made public by Uuugggg’s family in one of his mod pages on the Steam Workshop on the 11th of July and proliferated onto the r/RimWorld subreddit with 375k subscribers. From this point onwards, the comments on the Steam workshop page for the “Replace stuff” mod are primarily simply “o7”. To date (mid-May 2026), more than 2400 o7 salutes and still more are added each day for this one popular mod. Interspersed in the line of o7 comments are users asking for the mod to be updated indicating a reading where o7 is still seen as a salute to the mod, and not the modder’s passing. In these cases, other users explain the situation without sensationalism and often offer a link to the continued version of the mod, taken up by community members with the family’s permission.

While parasocial mourning has been documented in the sphere of social media (Klastrup, 2015, 2018) the specifics of how player communities surrounding single-player games function in the face of loss and mourning seem largely a hidden phenomenon. “RIP’ing”, as Klastrup (2015) puts it, is an expressive phenomenon on social media, yet on the Steam platform, there are no algorithms to proliferate the news and the practice of “RIP-ing”. As a user very concisely comments:

“I thought people were memeing with the whole "rest in peace" thing, like that you had maybe announced stopping modding or something. Turns out it was, in fact, not a meme. Rest in peace, and thank you for all the joy your mods have brought to me, my husband, and my friends <3”

While text beyond simply o7 is relatively rare in the many comments since the news of Uuugggg’s passing, they mainly express appreciation for his work and what he has contributed to people’s experiences with the game. The many “o7” can be seen as a particular form of RIP-ing within a sci-fi game community, but the contextual shift of the meme is expressed in the solemn messages on this now memorial site. These messages indicate reflective and emotional moments of individual players in the face of loss, which notably include contextualising and pronouncing the hidden relationship between the mod-user and the mod creator. As one user states: “o7 Uuugggg you've been this small part of my life for nearly 7 years. thank you for your hard work, Rest In Peace.” And yet another user expresses the deeper meaning of mods as relational contributions to the community: “o7 Rest in peace you beautiful man, with your passion you have contributed more than mods and scraps of code, you contributed a little extra joy into the lives of over a million souls.” These expressions of parasocial grief using o7 as a form of RIP’ing, along with the more expressive memorial texts, indicate that there are complexities within the parasocial relationship experienced by mod-users towards modders which go beyond that of a consumer-producer relationship. Indeed, this event confounds what questions we could and

should be asking to understand what role modders have in the individual playful practices of mod-users in relation to single-player games.

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