

# Recommendations for the Masonic Grant Program

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Dedicated to our hero, munmap

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# I. Introduction

## Opening

We are in an unprecedented position. Not just for a minecraft hobby club or group of friend groups, but even in a more general sense. How often is it that so much wealth is concentrated in the hands of such a small group of people? The Spawnmasons truly are the one percent on 2b2t at present.

That has carried with it a whole host of benefits and baggage ranging from the creation of Gringotts and construction of Sky Masons, to helping facilitate the greater rise of individual shops at the expense of still others through the creation of scarcity of resources. There is a cause-effect relationship that is difficult to spell out or see as even the small bubble of the 2b2t community is dynamic and complicated. What it is easy to see and illustrate, though, is that we have a significant impact on this community and what happens in it, be it through our activities (collective or individual) or responses to our activities on the part of others that may or may have our best interests at heart.

It is my belief that the Masonic Grant Program (henceforth abbreviated as MGP) is an excellent way to make a positive impact throughout the community. Based on my conversations with other advocates for this program, however, I have a very different perspective on the costs, benefits, and other implications of this program; this is a golden opportunity both for us and for the rest of the community either way, though. Because of the sheer amount of talking points, I've elected to present these thoughts and perspectives in the form of an essay.



## Core Assumptions

There are several underlying core assumptions underpinning this document:

1. The Spawnmasons ultimately opt to do the MGP at all
2. There is a vetting procedure that is reasonably effective at preventing donations to bad faith actors
3. The group continues to have an abundance of materials
4. The group is interested in further networking with potential future guests
5. The group holds values and standards of behavior they would like to see reflected elsewhere
6. That there is even a single person that cares how this group is viewed externally (see section II.)

I must recommend this system *not* be adopted if all of these criteria aren't met, because from the POV of cost vs. benefits, costs occur on our end of the system and are therefore much more certain, whereas benefits occur on the other end of the system which at best we can only

influence; costs within the system are definite while the benefits are not. The material cost is negligible realistically speaking, but it's by no means the only one (see section V).

## II. Public Perception

### Public Perception and its Importance

An issue that has plagued this group for the past few years is disconnect on a member-to-member basis concerning the importance of public perception. Some care, some don't - we all act accordingly. The root of the matter is that as long as any single public-facing individual exists in the group that does not care what others think of this group, and acts accordingly - the results oftentimes are not good for those that do care. The result of this disconnect on fundamental values gives ammunition to bad faith actors that do not have our best interests at heart, and will impact those other members that *do* care about public perception. In this way, members that don't care unintentionally aid in the harm of members that do, through negligence. Ultimately, we have an important role in this community that we ought to protect and expand upon both for our benefit and the benefit to the positive parts of the community around us. A good place to start for this (and frankly anything else) is from a position of care and respect to those within the group. For those that don't care what the public thinks or does (if you dislike shops or want guests, in many senses you already *do* care even if you tell yourself otherwise), supporting the MGP is quite possibly actually *against* your best interests and you should instead advocate for protecting the Gringotts Bank from risky investments.

### PR Fails

Some players will inevitably see this as the Spawnmasons stealing their stuff and then giving it back at will and interpret it as a power play, or flex, etc. and decide to be unhappy about it. Others (like the 5th Column, for instance) will probably actively present the MGP as an

overall negative thing, perhaps pointing out the obvious that this is funded using 'stolen' materials. There are many ways to view and present this program, although they will ultimately depend on what is said about it initially, and how much it is said. I will elaborate on this more in the next section, but we really should hit the ground running with this, talk this project up, break the ice with some lighthearted discussion and humor, and probably be especially liberal in giving materials out to start with. Some people will passively dislike this system and some will actively work to harm it in some way or present it in a negative light to others. If no one gives room for a flashpoint to cause drama, it won't particularly matter. Arguing with people who want to argue with you will never go your way, and trying to convince someone that isn't looking to be convinced doesn't work out. Who knows what the problems will be in terms of PR with this - I think it's a pretty safe assumption there will be something. Just don't engage, and make sure everyone knows how big of a hero to 2b2t that munmap is. It's time to work towards encouraging a shift in public perception from greedy Spawnmason robber baron debt collectors to eccentric Spawnmason trillionaires.

## How to Present this Project - munmap: Our Hero

Something we would benefit from and can start on now is promoting a humorous narrative that munmap is Robin Hood, Santa Clause, etc. In a public-facing grant application front, this should absolutely be put forward. A lot of people are obviously (and justifiably) unhappy to have been robbed. Some well-placed lighthearted and obviously satirical humor concerning munmap could help diffuse some of the resentment. Perhaps munmap visits a spawn base and builds a kitten sanctuary, or maybe munmap goes around shaking hands and kissing babies; perhaps munmap gives stuff to some people that dont have stuff.

What if munmap suddenly did a drop party at spawn or became Santa Claus for a day and delivered coal to all the silly little people at spawn?

Munmap is the hero of 2b2t, we should make sure people know.

Whenever this project goes public as it seems it will be happening, it's important that the initial reception be as positive as possible.

### III. Community Cultivation

#### Building Community through Spread of Values and Growth of Friendly Groups

It can't be understated how significant the level of material scarcity on the server is at present. There's tons of players out there that don't have materials to do the things they want to. There's likely good builders among them too. Oftentimes they have long-since quit 2b2t by the time their projects are public. Other times, they're drawn to join groups so they are able to realize their projects at all. If you're looking purely for builds, those are your people. Sometimes they appreciate it and become part of whatever group and become friends with others there. I personally have had a lot of success with this, as have others in the Spawnmasons that've run their own groups - others here are here because of those same efforts.

Another potential benefit to giving out grants to friendly people is to promote the growth of groups that share our values (like not being a jerk, or liking cats, or not being racist). Based on everything outlined above, additional preference for MGP grants should not necessarily be placed on people that build well; I'd argue that more benefit to both us and the community would come from donating to people that are friendly and social regardless of building ability or project scope, in the hopes that they continue to exist here, continue to hold those positive values, and perhaps congregate into new friendly groups or join already existing ones.



People often join groups looking to be able to do things they're not able to do on their own, or perhaps they're looking for a community - they stay in groups long term because they find friends there and feel included. We're in a unique position where we can help facilitate the creation of positive environments like that and foster and nurture our wholesome corner of the community.

Besides the Spawnmasons, at present there's permanent groups like Astral Brotherhood, Spawn Builders Association, and the Ancients, and also event groups like the Party Committee and Spawn Migration in this wholesome friendly part of the community. By extension, there are also varying numbers of smaller groups too. Why stop there? Maybe tomorrow a new group pops up that we all get along well with. Maybe a week from now some cool secret base group loses their stash and needs help. Maybe a month from now the server is suddenly buzzing with activity again and a lot of awesome people suddenly enter the social climate. This group is far more influential (be it directly, indirectly) than I think most here realize, and to do the MGP is a great and healthy way to flex this in a way that benefits many people. To be proactive about extending this kind and generous hand out means that people are more likely to be aware of it when it'd be of benefit to them to utilize the opportunity that it provides.



## Good Builders Should Not Be the Only Grant Recipients

If the primary goal of MGP is to get impressive or unique builds created, there will be ample opportunities for us to be disappointed. I don't doubt cool structures can and will result from MGP grants, but so would a lot of not good builds (if they're made at all). Instead, give materials to good people, and hope this pays dividends in terms of the social makeup of the community and general group ecosystem in the long term. Most players' builds are not worth funding from a purely aesthetic standpoint - cool bases or projects resulting from this are certainly not unlikely, but they're far less likely than other potential benefits, such as building better relations with the public or meeting cool new people. Opportunities to help unique or interesting build projects should certainly be pursued, but grant donations being limited to this fairly small population would hamper the system's overall utility.

## Donations to Already-Established Groups

Building a better community starts through building stronger relationships with more people already in the community. The more friendly groups are able to do things, the more they are able to attract new recruits, which means more cool people. Empowering the right groups in this manner will mean a better community. This pays long term dividends, such as: a larger pool to recruit from, more people that share and promote similar values to us, more people that have incentive to stick around in the community, and less normal and tolerable people unknowingly joining bad groups that do things like sell items, cloutchase, or attempt to harm us. While people obviously have their own opinions about things, they are influenced by the people they spend time around and their opinions by extension, giving positive folks the edge will make a huge difference long term and represents a strong and indirect tool in the Spawnmason arsenal that isn't currently really being used.

## Institution of a Fund for New Events/Other Holiday Observances

Nearly all seasonal or otherwise recurring event groups are run by people in this group - it's another of the many facets of this group's perceived influence. These masonic-related-events are most visible in the Party Committee (which provides an excellent event that brings players together in the in-game events after they go public), although there is also the Spawn Migration. Partially because of how some other groups and individuals view us, and because they perceive such events as extensions of the Spawnmasons, some issues result:

1. Hostile entities sometimes start events with specifically anti-Spawnmason undertones that are disguised as community concern (see D\_loaded's reactions to his holiday event griefs last year, and orsond hyping it up and putting down Party Committee). Their goals are pushing people apart rather than bringing them
2. Other detractors put significant effort into finding and destroying Party Committee bases
3. Because of these efforts, these regularly-recurring calendar-based event bases are often forced to have fairly restricted rosters.
4. These restricted rosters tend to be almost entirely Spawnmasons, Guestmasons, and near-future Guestmasons.

This perception isn't really a problem, I'd argue it's somewhat accurate, even. What is a problem is the people that aren't as trusted get left out in the cold while such events are constructed. Projects people from this group have attended/run that aren't strictly recurrent calendar-based events and include a wider range of players (like Autumn Drain, Rat House, Concord, and the migrations) are irregular in scheduling. These sorts of events are the only ones that are somewhat safe without the use of clever tricks or simple misinformation as looking at a calendar doesn't indicate the events are happening. How about Loo lodge getting visited during our last meeting(s) there after the schedule and location were realized? The unpredictable nature of some of these events results in a higher degree of security.

At present, the only recurring large community events/projects that consistently involve large numbers of non-masons are the Spawn Migration and Pitfight. This is largely due to wholly

understandable security necessities and realities, but means that a high degree of care must be taken with Party Committee base rosters as people outside of the group know the events are ongoing, have a vague idea of where and when they are going to be, and also have a general idea of who is building those events.

BoomerangVillage has offered to extend the Party Committee's activities to allow for other players to run new events as the Party Committee. Accompanying this with event grants means more community events and more inclusion in building them by probably the single most community-oriented organization on the server. How incredible would it be to have other things to go to that current members of this group don't necessarily have to work on to make them happen? This is another BIG opportunity that has significant potential for community-building, improvement in public perception, recruitment, general fun, and a pretty big kick in the teeth of the people that try to disrupt, bad-mouth, or replace events like the Party Committee's parties. It also includes more players in the creation of events without harming the security of the Halloween or Christmas bases.

What if there was to be a permanently outstanding grant offer to fund the creation of new events or observance of other holidays in a more decentralized capacity that is run through the Party Committee? It's a lot more difficult to look for, say, a Valentine's Day base if you're unsure if there even is one to begin with and you're furthermore unsure of who exactly is/would even be at it. What about a 4th of July base funded by the Spawnmasons and built by a few members plus some new volunteers that we have yet to even meet at this current point in time? Perhaps next year we can find ourselves celebrating International Cat Day or Necktie Day. The possibilities are endless, and whatever is being built and celebrated can cater to populations on the server we haven't even realized existed, and could result in building connections with groups of people we've not yet met.

By extension, there's room for outright other events, for things like spawnbases, pvp tournaments, minigames, rebuild projects, etc. I'd be more than happy to start up some other occasional spawnbase events myself, as doubtless would others in and outside of this group. The Spawn Migrations will likewise continue once or twice yearly.

Put all these events together, empower more people, have some variety, and suddenly BAM there's a social calendar. This is a big opportunity to become the hub the 2b2t community has been sorely lacking.



## Provide Grants for Specific Things: Creation of Profit Incentives for Positive and Constructive Endeavors

Similar to having permanently outstanding grant offers for events and holiday observances, there's room for similar but more specific things. Maybe people build monuments that promote love, hugs, and cats, or perhaps they destroy codysmile11 signs, or perhaps they do spawn projects. If there's anything we want done, guess what? We can just *create* a profit incentive for someone to do it and have listings for different things we want done and perhaps some indication of the reward for doing it. A past example of something extremely similar was the Vortex Coalitions VoCoin payments to players that built obsidian VoCo logos around spawn. This system is applicable for a whole host of things from outsourcing labor for small menial tasks, to getting new spawn builds made. We can create a whole in-game economy that is

cashless and perhaps accompanied by a return of Smibcoin. Leijurv has already acquired <https://smibco.in/> to help facilitate this.

## IV. Harm to Shops

### Why Are Shops Controversial?

Shops have existed on the server ever since it became popular. Where there is a profit incentive, at some point someone will figure out how to benefit from it. Many players and groups have operated shops over the past 7 years, some players in here currently have done so with great success in the past. I am unsure if we all necessarily agree why shops are a negative thing, or even if it's the shops themselves or instead their ways of doing business. It's certainly not objectionable that an adult with disposable income should be able to buy materials from people; I doubt anyone would take issue with a hypothetical shop operating that way. It is also controversial to many players in the anarchy community (if not throughout the internet as a whole) that in-game monetization exists at all, especially when targeted towards people that often are too young to even have a regular income.

What is quite clear is that regardless of the reasoning, many players both inside of and outside of the Spawnmasons do not like shops in their current form.

### Reducing Scarcity, Replacing shops, Removing the profit incentive

Any targeted actions against shops that will actually result in significant harm to their everyday business must be to the effect of funding their customers, who are largely unsavory individuals. It's worth posing the question of why people turn to shops at all. Why are they poor? Do they have no initiative to get materials themselves? Are they too unintelligent to properly hide their stashes? That's the negative side of the coin that doubtless applies to many people, although certainly others simply have more income than time and act accordingly.

Certainly giving out free materials will generally result in less shop traffic, but we would need to *replace* shops to actually get rid of them. Shops exist largely because there's a profit incentive to operate them in the first place. Replacing shops and removing their profit incentive are one and the same. To replace them, their niche needs to be occupied by us.

This amounts to funding spawn pvpers at minimum. They're not people we ought to engage in regular dealings with, but if the goal is eradication of shops, this is the absolute minimum. To make it easier for them to do what they do, probably more will come/stay, and that is not a part of the community that we should promote growth of or pursue relationships with.

Nextly, groups would need to be funded. All groups. In practice this means even funding newplayer groups with no goals and few members. It also means funding people that actively dislike us and attempt to convince others to as well. For groups that operate shops, having materials also means selling materials. You would need to somehow prevent them from doing that.

These aren't particularly great options, but would remove two major customer sectors, and would significantly harm reseller shops (which bulk buy from basehunters or other shops and then resell those materials piecemeal) by default. This also actually removes *some* incentives for engaging in basehunting by extension. The reality of the situation is that shops are here to stay. Serious attempts to get rid of them with carrots to buyers will carry significant risks for blowback to the community. Sticks to shops are an effective temporary measure, though, but likewise won't get rid of them. Stealing shop stashes is a great temporary measure, but it doesn't solve the problem unless every sellable stash is relocated to Gringotts. Otherwise, it's just a server-wide game of Whac-A-Mole™ that aids other shops by eliminating competition and increasing scarcity of materials. It also cannot be understated that even during past dupes, shops have sprung up. Even when the materials are available, people still often buy them. People are stupid!

## The Unfortunate Tradeoff to Direct Attacks on Shops

There is almost certain to be *some* degree of harm to shops by the MGP, but it's impossible to say how much would really come.

The largest segments of buyers I am aware of are pvpers, reseller shops, and other groups that are oftentimes hostile to us (e.g Noxshop-affiliated groups, Donfuer). Funding any of these carries significant baggage; if goodwill can't be built with someone and they're not going to make good use of materials they're given, the sole *potential* positive outcome at that point is harm to shops' business. To truly hurt shops where it counts, we likely need to fund people that by any other metric might not be worth MGP aid and furthermore may not even hold our best interests at heart. If we're opting to go all-in on harming shops, we'll need to be pragmatic with grants to a degree that might actually cause *worse* issues. How about a 2b2t with no shops, but all crystal pvpers are funded by the Spawnmasons? What about a 2b2t where the Spawnmasons give grants to Donfuer so they don't bulk-buy thousands of dollars of materials in single transactions?

We all dislike shops, but it can't be ignored that this program might not hit them where it counts.



## How to End Shops

Bracketing the above discussion on why serious efforts to end shops are damaging to the community, it's not overly complicated to harm them significantly.

Shops are just another input → output system - shop owners acquire materials, exchange value with customers, and (generally) give them the agreed-upon materials to accomplish their desired goals.

Each step in the system represents another link in the chain that we can attempt to break, although truthfully not all are practical.

Chronologically in the system, the options for how to disrupt shops are as follows:

1. Interfere with shops' acquisition of materials
2. Reduce scarcity in parts of the community likely to buy from shops
3. Undermine confidence in shops
4. Make the use of materials difficult

Number 1 is already accomplished as best as it realistically could be thanks to munmap, but only hurts some shops.

Number 2 is the best option but it is still bad.

Number 3 is perhaps viable but unlikely considering shop hate is nothing new and they still successfully operate in large numbers.

Number 4's best case scenario is disrupting spawn pvp temporarily, not viable either.

Shops stop when they're unable to conduct business, and number 2 is the best way to break that cycle. Reduction of scarcity on the part of the regular customers would in effect *replace* shops.



## V. Costs and Waste Mitigation

### Systems and Outputs: Costs

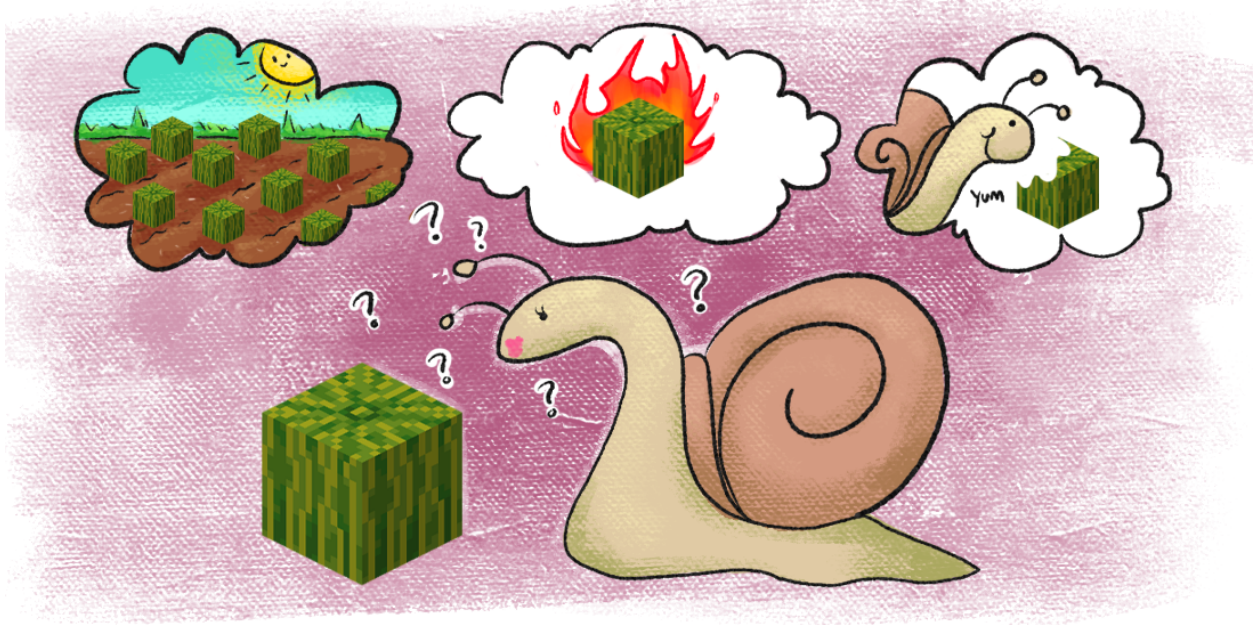
Any system with inputs and outputs has costs and benefits to both the operator and the user. The operator is the provider of the service, while the user is the recipient.

With a basic assumption of the respective system actually operating, the costs to the operator are the only absolutely certain part of the whole system, which overall comprises both costs and benefits to both the operator and user, respectively.

Intangible benefits (e.g feelings, opinions, reputation etc.) are the most likely output from a system as they require the least amount of conscious effort on the part of the user. Positive results of this regard are still not guaranteed, and are also not practical to measure. There is, of course, not a 1 → 1 conversion of 'physical' materials to an abstract sense of goodwill either.

For example, let's say Catflushed Snail Man is giving Snelly the Snail a melon in the expectation that she will start a sanctuary with the melon. The melon is a cost to the operator, as is the time to transport the melon. The operator is Snail Man. The user is Snelly. Snail Man's desired user response is that Snelly (the user) will build a sanctuary with the melon.

What happens if Snelly just eats the melon, or if the Team Pepsi gangstalkers steal the melon, or Snelly does indeed build the sanctuary, or maybe Snelly does but it looks like garbage (or maybe racist garbage or laggy garbage), or Snelly just does nothing at all with it. Certainly the most likely outcome is the one where Snelly is at the very least just thankful to have had the melon provided in the first place. Snelly's response is still absolutely not guaranteed, but it's still more likely a response than the expensive and time-consuming construction of a full sanctuary.



## Management of Costs

Luckily for us, the biggest barrier to philanthropic programs is to have capital to give away in the first place. Between having one of the (if not the) largest stash networks ever assembled, in addition to the new and amazing Farming meta, this is not an issue. Likewise, the management of said resources within the MGP is pretty firmly in 'okay <3 yay!' territory as far as I'm concerned; the people who have expressed interest in being involved with this program are definitely up to the task and have anyways largely been the ones to go out and collect the materials that'd be used in the first place.

The time commitment to vetting grants, delivering grants, and keeping an eye on projects funded by grants (if this is something that is part of the system) is another definite cost which cannot be ignored although it's ultimately one largely assumed by the operators of the system in the first place. It really can't be understated how much effort these folks have put in. Leijurv has indicated towards the creation of baritone-powered delivery bots in the future, which more or less eliminates time-related delivery costs.

## Output Fails

As the outputs of the system are not definite, sometimes you get an outcome you did not want or intend to occur; maybe you don't get anything at all. Sometimes people fail to follow through. Especially when something is given for free, there will be problems.

No matter the vetting system, there will be some people that game the system and walk off with materials and do something we don't want them to, or get robbed, or fail to use them at all. Whether through inaction, malice, or neglect, the result is ultimately the same - inputs were entered into the system and costs were incurred with the expectation of benefits that were not derived. An easy mitigatory measure to this would simply be to have a maximum delivery size or to deliver approved requests in installments.

## Institution of a Maximum Delivery Size

Cap the amount of materials that can be delivered in a single installment either on a quantitative or proportional basis. There's few situations where a policy of this sort would pose a roadblock to the completion of a project. Certainly this doesn't need to *always* be adhered to in cases of grant donations to trusted people, projects, or groups, but as a general policy this would result in an effective loss prevention measure.

## Material Risks to the MGP

There's a whole host of risks to account for in running the MGP, although truthfully, most would not cause significant harm to the Spawnmasons even if they were to be realized.

Output fails and bad faith actors gaming the system are adequately mitigated against by simply vetting donation applications and having maximum delivery sizes. Certainly neither measure is perfect, but adequate loss prevention measures like this reduce material losses (which already are

realistically just a drop in the bucket in generous terms). The Gringotts stash network is unlikely to grow legs and walk away either.

On the material side of things, the MGP is unlikely to result in significant avoidable losses in materials.



## Requirement of Proof of Work For Repeat Applicants

The cost inputs of this system ultimately represent investments on the part of the Gringotts Bank, and while being overly intrusive into the payouts of said investments is ill-advisable, it is important to make sure the materials are at the very least being used. The use should not particularly matter in specific terms (as build quality should not govern donations), but it is important to make sure previous donations are actually used, and for good purposes. Perhaps a respective user's plans change from what they originally said they would be when they requested the donation, for instance. This is not particularly problematic. What would be, however, is if they sold them or did something malicious with them (like building lag machines or offensive map arts). The investments these grants represent are first and foremost in the community and the cultivation of the good parts of it, rather than in a specific predetermined

project, although we shouldn't stress this to grant recipients. The proof of work is not necessarily a screenshot of a build (although it certainly could be), but it's a representation in some format of what they did with the grant to create unique experiences or bring people together or just have fun. If someone wants more materials, they need to demonstrate they made acceptable use of previous donations.

## Why Coordinates To MGP-Funded Projects Shouldn't Be Required As a Precondition to Funding

This may sound strange in the context established by the proof of work suggestion, but to require concrete locations creates incentive for people to be dishonest about what they're requesting funding for, at minimum to mislead about the location(s) it's occurring at. This increases wasted time on both sides and also may scare away people that would represent advantageous donation opportunities. Screenshots of builds are at least tacitly more safe with the terrain generation changes (not that I'd trust those measures longterm to continuously provide better security), so certainly these can be sent for shorter-term projects at minimum.

## VI. Closing Remarks

Overall, this program is one that carries with it significant potential. Where that potential is ultimately directed is wholly dependent on which of these goals we pursue. To go wholesale for the community-centric route will unfortunately likely do minimal damage to shops, whereas to go 'full-send' on harming shops will doubtless harm parts of the community.

Over the course of writing this document, it has pleased me tremendously to see the munmap 0,0 Christmas party at Negative\_Entropy's tree - this is exactly the kind of thing we should be doing regardless of the route we ultimately opt to take with dispersion of resources. Munmap shaking

proverbial hands, kissing proverbial babies, and throwing actual drop parties will build goodwill and help to foster a positive image.

My personal recommendation is to take the community-focused route (advocated for in sections 2 and 3), as opposed to the shop-ending route (outlined in section 4), and otherwise harm shops in situations where it is practical to do so without causing unexpected negative outcomes (best-case is simply continuing to steal from them/nuking stashes where it is possible). I believe that supporting people, projects, groups, bases, builds, etc that promote or hold our shared visions and values for the community will cause everyone to reap long term rewards that the summation of the shop-killing systems simply do not measure up to.

Thanks for reading, SMIB