

Making Work More Like Play

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3D representation of space
characters (avatars)
objects that populate the space
persistence
communication among players



“3D virtual worlds”

What is currently being explored in being done in Second Life in which participants create all content:

Reuters virtual news bureau

Toyota

Sun Microsystems

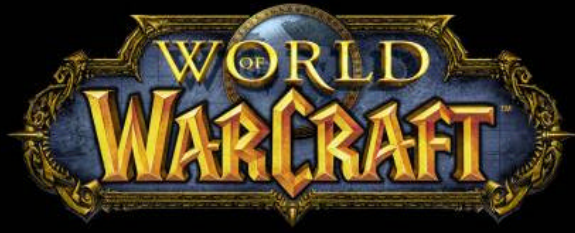
Several libraries

Swedish Embassy

IBM (in-house library, customer interaction, training, remote work groups)

Intel (remote work groups, fuel processor sales)

Second Life does not have the mass appeal of World of Warcraft or similar games, but it is an important early platform



Blizzard Entertainment's massively multiplayer
online role playing game

released November 2004

8.5 million players worldwide

Asia, North America Europe, Australia, New Zealand...

Available in seven languages

two versions of Chinese

English

Korean

German

French

Spanish

cross-cultural appeal

Create a character with a "race" and "class"

Engage in various mini-games, usually involving slaying monsters on "quests" (missions) with rewards



dwarf warrior



gnome rogue



orc hunter

Prufrock

Completing quests enables players to “level” i.e., advance from level 1 to level 70



get a quest when you see the exclamation point



turn in a quest when you see the question mark

high fantasy motif, medieval theme, based on Tolkien's novels



J.R.R. Tolkien



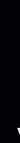
WoW is a social game

Players can join "guilds" (named groups of players who play and socialize together)

Many activities require players to be grouped

Guilds maintain websites and voice chat servers

40 man raid



Socializing

Players also have out of guild "friends" who they keep track of on a list something like a buddy list -- wider personal social network in the game

Players communicate in voice and text chat

text chat window

Ventrilo, Teamspeak

And also out of game on websites, forums, FAQs, wikis, blogs, Facebook groups

Search

Applications edit

Photos

Groups

Events

Marketplace

more

UC Irvine Flyer

PUMA PURSUIT Social Run



Why would you run indoors when it's summertime? Come to PUMA's untraditional, scavenger hunt-esque outdoor social run.

*6/19 Tuesday Road Runner 24291 Avenida De La Carlota Laguna Hills, CA

[create | see all]

Share +

World of Warcraft

UCSD

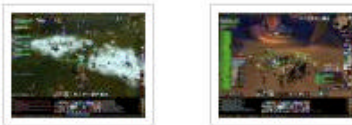
Information

Group Info

Name: World of Warcraft
Type: n/a
Description: For gamers who love WoW

Photos

Displaying 2 photos. See All



Discussion Board

Displaying 3 of 59 discussion topics. See All

Server Thread

17 posts by 17 people. Updated on Mar 16, 2007 at 8:25 PM.

Post Your UIs!

2 posts by 2 people. Updated on Nov 22, 2006 at 2:56 AM.

Selling my WoW account, uber godly account

1 post by 1 person. Updated on Nov 14, 2006 at 1:42 PM.

Members

This group has 62 members at UCSD. See All



Alex Primes, Brian Preedanon, Karen Hom, George Megally, Erik Van Esselstyn, Jeff 'JHustle' Yan

The Wall

Displaying 10 of 11 wall posts. See All



View Discussion Board

Report Group

Share +

Related Groups

- Gamers Unanonymous
Internet & Technology - Gaming
Family Guy Club
Entertainment & Arts - Television
UCSD Class of 2008
Procrastinators United!
Student Groups - Advising Groups
In N Out Rules
Common Interest - Food & Drink

Admins

- Thanh Tran (UCSD) (creator)

WoW is more a *world* than a game because of its diverse activities

make money

go to the bank

buy and sell at the Auction House

repair equipment

acquire training

learn professions such as alchemy, leatherworking, engineering, herbalism, fishing

explore

potion



quest item



herb



Billy McClure

chat, quests, movement, graphics, sense of fun

creativity -- concept, story line, new lyrics to Michael Jackson's song



Ethnographic study

Interest piqued by undergrad students

Immersive participant-observation fieldwork since December 2005

Created characters, joined a guild

Conducted interviews both online and offline

Collected logs from in-game chat (/chatlog)

Pseudonyms, preserved spelling and punctuation in player quotes

night elf priest

herbalist

alchemist

fishing

cooking

first aid



Play

Contested, but according to some play theorists (Sutton-Smith, Huizinga, Turner) play:

1. exists within its own boundary separate from the ordinary
2. involves customary activities that are repeated (ritualistically)
3. is voluntary
4. makes the player feel good in some way

How are these elements manifest in *World of Warcraft*? Can they carry over to the workplace?

Why does WoW make people feel good?

Known as a game to which players become “addicted”

Characteristics 1-3 (separation, ritual, autonomy)

Community

Enchantment

Mastery

Autonomy

voluntary: own pace, constant sense of self-directed accomplishment

Post on guild website:

Possible farewell

Since a few weeks ago, WoW has been well...boring....

The hardest part is to say farewell to the friends I've made, so I won't do that until I've made my decision. In addition, i'm thinking about giving away my account, so if anyone wants it, send me an email at xyz@gmail.com Better not to waste 3 60s and I wouldn't feel comfortable auctioning it on ebay.

(This player returned to the game after several months away.)

Community

Post on guild website:

Before I got WoW, I had a lot of fun with my PS2, Xbox, Gamecube, and PC games. I loved checking out the altest games, and I played lots of RTS like Dawn of War and Battle for Middle Earth.

Since WoW, I ain't bought a damn thing. Battle for Middle earth has both a sequel out now, and an expansion coing out xmas, and i won't buy either. I love Neverwinter Nights 1, had all expansions and tons of downloaded content. I won't buy the new one either.

Other games are enticing, but in WoW what you do is persistent. It stays around. You can share your achievements with others. I mean, I heard that Oblivion was a simply awesome game.... but I can't see the point anymore of playing a game where you increase level, get new cool looking armor and weapons that do neat stuff and you play your game on your own.

Here, I can not only show off my neat new gear that I can use now that I leveled yadda yadda, but I can use it to help your character through a tough [fight], and have a shared experience.

The multiplayer experience really is the reason I can't stop playing this game.

Enchantment and Mastery

Graphics

Medieval theme

Lore

Everyone enjoys moving through the levels

Much discourse in chat about attaining mastery which is celebrated by one's guild and in-game friends

Ding

Woot 375 fishing!

[[Merciless Gladiator's Salvation](#)]

Work and Play

How do we link play activities such those as in WoW to workplace activities in 3D virtual worlds?

Not straightforward

In WoW discourse, play is marked as separate from work
in chat
guild website

Post on guild website:

Hello, I filled out an application [to join the guild] pretty recently [and I have a question]....

Okay, gotta get back to work

Thanks!

~Myrna

Reply:

Wait, Myrna.....what is this 'work' you speak of?

I'll go google that word.

Arian

Reply:

Im not really sure but... but... i tell ya, I have heard nothing but bad things about "Work"! If i was you I wouldnt even go there...

Takamu

From guild website:

Zaq: since the date [of the guild event] was moved from tuesday to monday, I won't be attending. I do that thing called 'employment' on monday.

Players commonly give precise times when they have to go to work or school, lamenting the transition out of World of Warcraft back to RL, Marking the crossing of the boundary to another realm of activity

Guild chat:

Beehive: well people, i think it's bedtime...gotta be at work in 6 hours, so i MIGHT need sleep if they're going to get anything outta me. g'night all

Party chat:

Malita: k i have about 10 mins then i have to go to sleep lol school tomorrow blah!

Malita: i have to be up at 5 am, and out at 6 am... it's 10:38 now

These player comments should make us skeptical about merging work and play as players think of it as so very separate

As should play theory, and the fact that text-based virtual worlds were tried in the workplace in the 90s without success.

At work, two conditions of play are violated:

1. autonomy
2. separation from ordinary activity

Some work activities may involve aspects of what makes people feel good:

community

mastery

and others??

But not always and rarely autonomy or enchantment

There is repetition, but people do not seem to find comfort in it the way they do in religious or play rituals.

So will virtual worlds at work only simulate the real benefits of virtual play worlds?

Not necessarily.

There are advantages to 3D graphical worlds (vs text)

- Social bonding

- Visualization of shared objects and space

- Cross-cultural appeal

In face to face communication we know that bonding is facilitated by:

1. touch
2. eating and drinking
3. sharing experience in a common space
4. informal conversation

(“Beyond Bandwidth,” Nardi, 2006)

/hug is a common command in online virtual worlds -- **text and 3D**
virtual cookies, beer, and so on are common
realistic representation of space
informal conversation is ubiquitous

Social bonding occurs in chatrooms and text-based social worlds
but it takes time (Walther 2002)

3D worlds may be more successful:
quick sense of presence of others through their characters
sense of movement --> childlike playfulness

Encourage casual socializing, antics that creates social bonds

/dance

/grin

/joke (voiced)

/train (voiced)

/kiss (voiced)

Formulaic means of communicating

when you don't know people, always something to
do or say



Viewable objects are very compelling
nice blend of text and pictures

a mouseover to get
detail on equipment
and further stats

one key press to bring
up character window

link in chat



3D virtual worlds are popular worldwide; medium transcends cultures

they may attenuate cultural differences

represented by a character whose looks have nothing to do with
real race, gender, age, ethnicity

people who are very different from one another can collaborate

In my guild we have Anglos, Latinos, Pacific Islanders, Australians,
Anglophone Canadians, French Canadians, men/women, and members
from age 12 to "Guild Grandma"

people focus on shared goals rather than demographic differences

perhaps there are advantages to the simulated body as opposed to the real body

3D virtual worlds have some advantages and possibilities

But cultural changes in workplaces are also needed

Organizations have the opportunity to pick up not just the technology, but the culture of play in online worlds

- provide more autonomy to workers

- more opportunities for casual voluntary socializing (not of the forced sort)

- more opportunities for people to create blogs, FAQs, wikis, Facebook groups that spontaneously emerge in game worlds

Experimentation, openness, playfulness needed as organizations try out virtual worlds for work

My future research

Experiments in Second Life at IBM

Cross-cultural issues WoW in China

thank you, Bonnie Nardi