ANTI-SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF SOCIAL PLAY

CULTURE AT PLAY: AVATARS, PLAYERS & OTHERS

10TH MARCH, 2023

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- TODAY, I'M GOING TO TALK ABOUT THE PLAYERS OF **VIRTUAL WORLDS**
  - MASSIVELY-MULTIPLAYER ONLINE ROLE-PLAYING GAMES
  - MMORPGS FOR **SHORT**
  - **MMOS** FOR **SHORTER**
- MMOS ARE BY THEIR VERY NATURE **SOCIAL** EXPERIENCES
  - EVEN PEOPLE WHO PLAY **ALONE** ARE PLAYING ALONE **TOGETHER**
- I HAVE A PARTICULAR **INTEREST** IN MMOS BECAUSE, WELL...

- FINAL FANTASY XIV, SQUARE ENIX, 2014

- I PLAYED THIS FOR >100 DAYS (>2400 HOURS)

- SECRET WORLD LEGENDS, FUNCOM, 2017

- I'D PLAYED 45 DAYS WHEN I QUIT
  - PLUS 150 DAYS FOR *THE SECRET WORLD*...

- ## STAR WARS: THE OLD REPUBLIC, BIOWARE, 2011

- ## I PLAYED ~6H/DAY FOR 137 DAYS IN 2012
  - 137 DAYS ELAPSED TIME, **33 DAYS** CPU TIME

- *WORLD OF WARCRAFT, BLIZZARD, 2004:*

245 DAYS

- # EVERQUEST, SONY ONLINE ENTERTAINMENT, 1999

- 0 DAYS...

DIKUMUD, COPENHAGEN UNIVERSITY, 1990

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[x2] A barrel has been left here.
An angry-looking statue of Hoturi is standing here.
An angry-looking statue of Priapus is standing here.
A statue of Odin is standing behind the altar.
A Sign for Newbies is here.
You are a guest here until you save yourself.

If you need
to get to your guild, use the guild medallion in your inventory. If you lose
it, pray to the statue of Odin for another.


105m/202e/38hlook
Temple of Udgaard
    You are inside the small and humble village temple in Udgaard.  A simple
stone altar, with strange stone carvings, is placed against the north wall.  A
small humble donation room is to the east.  The temple exit is south to the
Village Square.
[x2] A barrel has been left here.
An angry-looking statue of Hoturi is standing here.
An angry-looking statue of Priapus is standing here.
A statue of Odin is standing behind the altar.
A Sign for Newbies is here.

105m/202e/38h
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ABERMUD, ALAN COX, 1987

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Your wimpy value is set to 15. See 'help change' to see what that means.

The Temple Of Paradise
    You stand in the Temple of Paradise, a huge sandstone structure whose
walls are decorated with ancient carvings and runes, some so old that even
the priests no longer know their meanings.
    A single set of steps lead south, descending the huge mound upon which the
temple is built and ending in the forests below.
A roaring fire burns here.  Its flames make the temple sparkle and glitter.
    At your feet a huge sacrificial pit allows you to give valuables to the gods
in the hope of being rewarded.
A furled umbrella lies here.

Obvious exits are:
North : Welcome Center
South : Forest Track
 Down : Forest Track

Last login: Wed Sep  7 17:43:26 2005


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- MUD, ROY TRUBSHAW & RICHARD BARTLE, 1978

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Narrow road between lands.
You are stood on a narrow road between The Land and whence you came.
To the north and south are the small foothills of a pair of majestic
mountains, with a large wall running round. To the west the road
continues, where in the distance you can see a thatched cottage
opposite an ancient cemetery. The way out is to the east, where a
shroud of mist covers the secret pass by which you entered The
Land. It is raining.
*w
Narrow road.
You are on a narrow east-west road with a forest to the north and
Gorse scrub to the south. It is raining. A splendid necklace lies
on the ground.
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- MUD DIDN'T COME FROM **ANYTHING**

- THIS EXPLAINS WHY THIS TALK IS BEING GIVEN BY A **WHITE-HAIRED** OLD MAN

- IT WAS FROM MY EXPERIENCE WITH *MUD* THAT I DEVELOPED THE CONCEPT OF **PLAYER TYPES**

- PLAYER TYPES CONCERN PEOPLE WHO PLAY MMOS TO HAVE **FUN**

- IN 1996, I WROTE A **PAPER** IN WHICH I DESCRIBED **FOUR** PLAYER TYPES

  – IT'S BEEN CITED ~3,800 TIMES SO IS QUITE FAMOUS

- I DIDN'T WRITE THE PAPER TO SAY "**THESE** ARE **THE** FOUR TYPES", BUT TO SAY "THERE'S **MORE** THAN **ONE** TYPE"

  – PEOPLE USED TO DESIGN ONLY FOR **THEMSELVES**

- HERE'S THE PAPER'S **CLASSIC** GRAPH:

ACTING

KILLERS   ACHIEVERS

PLAYERS   WORLD

SOCIALISERS   EXPLORERS
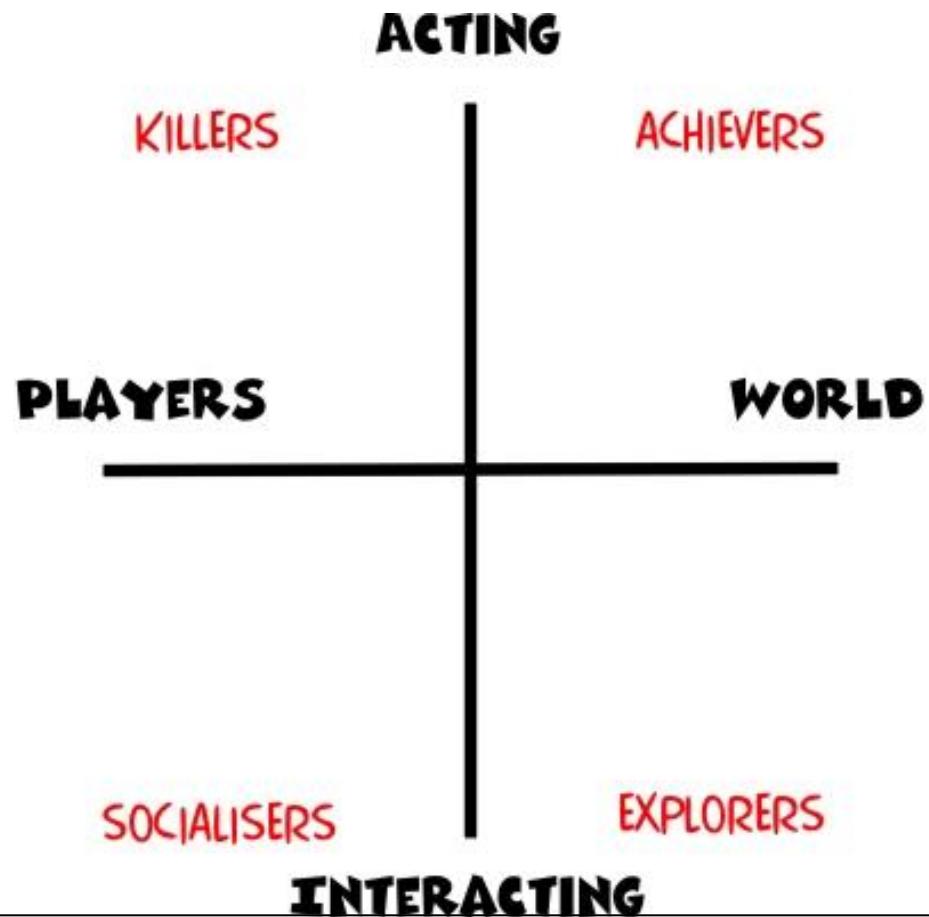
INTERACTING

- **ACHIEVERS** LIKE TO **ACT ON** THE VIRTUAL WORLD
  - THEY TREAT IT AS IF IT WERE A GAME
- **EXPLORERS** LIKE TO **INTERACT WITH** THE VIRTUAL WORLD
  - THEY SEEK TO KNOW MORE ABOUT IT
- **SOCIALISERS** ENJOY INTERACTING WITH **OTHER** PLAYERS
  - THE VIRTUAL WORLD PROVIDES THE CONTEXT
- KILLERS WANT TO **ACT ON** OTHER PLAYERS
  - EITHER AS GRIEFERS OR AS POLITICIANS

- I ONLY **CLAIM** THAT THE PLAYER TYPES MODEL WORKS FOR **MMORPGS**
- THIS IS BECAUSE I CAN **EXPLAIN** WHY IT WORKS FOR MMORPGS, BUT I **CAN'T** FOR OTHER TYPES OF GAMES
  - IN ESSENCE, IT'S A **QUEST** FOR **IDENTITY**, BUT **THAT** EXPLANATION TAKES A FURTHER **HOUR**...
- HOWEVER, OTHER PEOPLE **HAVE** SUCCESSFULLY APPLIED IT TO GAMES IN **GENERAL**
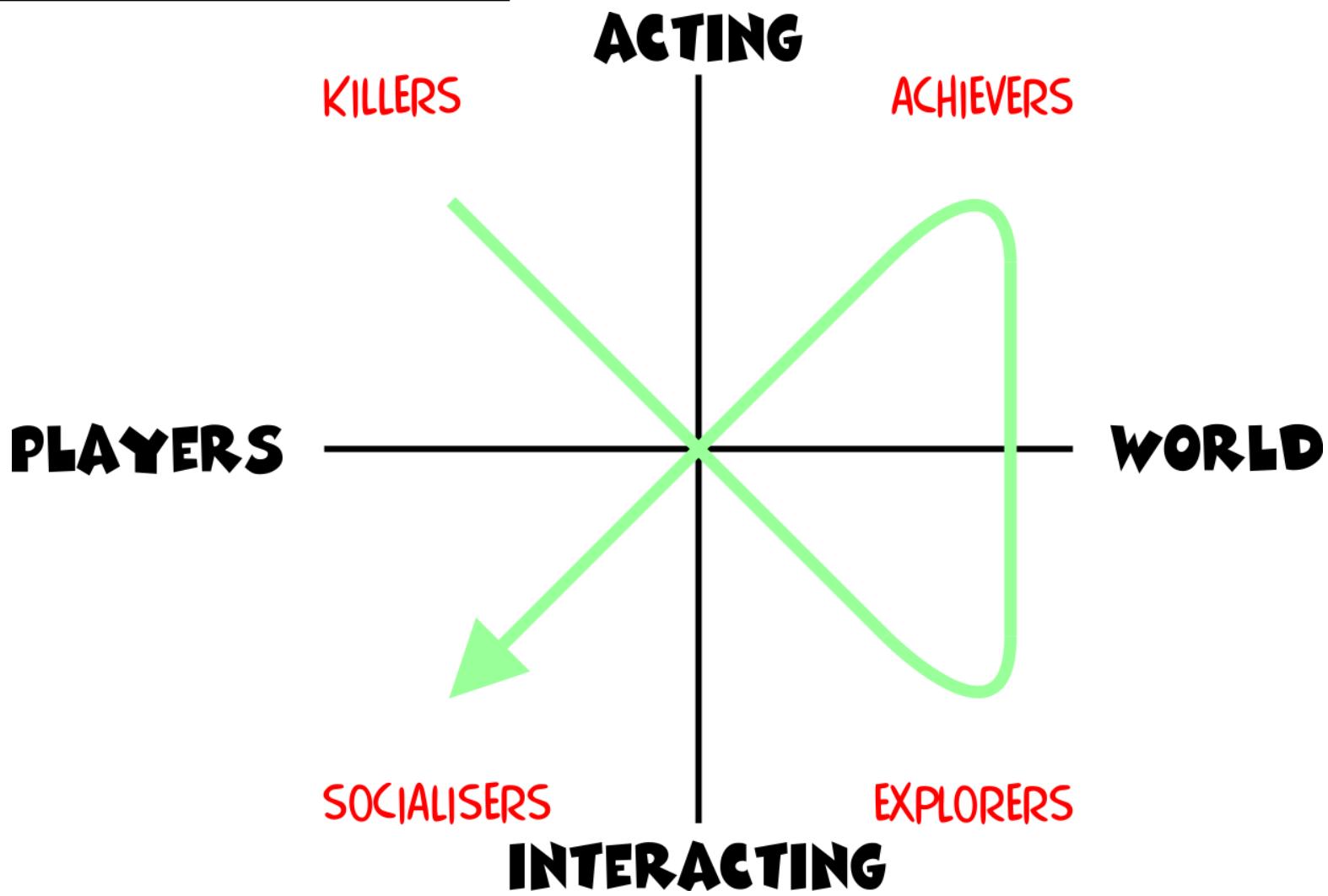 - EVEN SOME **NON**-GAMES, SUCH AS WEB DESIGN, GAMIFICATION AND ... WEIRDER STUFF

- ALMOST **ALL** MODERN MMORPGS ARE INFLUENCED BY PLAYER TYPES
  - IT'S BEEN **STANDARD** SINCE *ULTIMA ONLINE*
- A LOT OF **NON-MMOS** HAVE BEEN INFLUENCED BY IT, TOO
  - IT'S TAUGHT AT MANY **UNIVERSITIES**
  - I'M THE ANSWER TO **EXAMINATION** QUESTIONS..!
- PLAYER TYPES **REMIND** DESIGNERS TO CONSIDER DIFFERENT PLAYER **PERSPECTIVES**
  - I THEREFORE DON'T FEEL **TOO** BAD ABOUT MENTIONING THEM TODAY

- IN 2003, I EXPANDED THE MODEL TO **EIGHT** TYPES BY SPLITTING EACH IN **TWO**
  - IN A BOOK, *DESIGNING VIRTUAL WORLDS*
  - HELLO TO ANOTHER 2,500 CITATIONS!
- IT ADDRESSED WHY THERE WERE **TWO** SUB-TYPES OF KILLER (AND INDEED OF **EVERY** TYPE)
- ULTIMATELY, BY **DOING** THIS I COULD EXPLAIN **WHY** PEOPLE PLAY MMOS
  - THAT QUEST-FOR-IDENTITY THING
- FOR **TODAY'S** TALK, **ANOTHER** CONSEQUENCE IS IMPORTANT, THOUGH: **DRIFT**

- IT'S **LONG** BEEN KNOWN THAT OVER TIME, WHAT A PLAYER FINDS FUN **CHANGES**
  - SINCE **BEFORE** CONCEPT OF PLAYER TYPES EXISTED!
- IN *MUD*:
  - NEWBIES STARTED BY **KILLING** ONE ANOTHER
  - THEN ABANDONED THAT AND WENT **EXPLORING**
  - THIS DONE, THEY MOVED ON TO RACKING UP POINTS AND RISING THROUGH LEVELS – **ACHIEVING**
  - FINISHED AS GNARLED OLD-TIMERS **SOCIALISING**
- **MAIN SEQUENCE** FOR PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

- THERE ARE ACTUALLY **FOUR** SEQUENCES PLAYERS CAN FOLLOW, BUT **MOST** FOLLOW THIS ONE
  - IN **TWO** OF THE OTHERS, THEY **ALSO** END AS SOCIALISERS
  - IN THE **OTHER** ONE, THEY BECOME EXPLORERS
- THE THING IS, REMEMBER I SAID I SPLIT **EACH** OF THE FOUR TYPES INTO **TWO**?
- THERE ARE **TWO** KINDS OF SOCIALISER:
  - **NETWORKERS** ARE **EARLY-CAREER** SOCIALISERS
  - **FRIENDS** ARE **ELDER-GAME** SOCIALISERS

- ## NETWORKERS
  - FIND PEOPLE WITH WHOM TO INTERACT
  - GET TO KNOW THEIR FELLOW PLAYERS
  - LEARN WHO AND WHAT THESE PEOPLE KNOW
  - FIND OUT WHO'S **WORTH** HANGING OUT WITH
- ## FRIENDS
  - INTERACT WITH PEOPLE THEY ALREADY KNOW WELL
  - HAVE A DEEP/INTIMATE UNDERSTANDING OF THEM
  - ENJOY THEIR COMPANY
  - **ACCEPT** THEIR LITTLE FOIBLES...

- WE HAVE A **PROBLEM** HERE
- IN A **MATURE** MMO, MOST PLAYERS WILL HAVE PROGRESSED TO THE **END** OF THEIR DEVELOPMENT TRACK
- THEY WILL THEREFORE BE **FRIENDS**
- THEY **THINK** THEY'RE ACHIEVERS, WAITING FOR NEW END-GAME CONTENT, BUT THEY'RE **NOT**!
- THEY PLAY WITH THE **SAME** GROUP OF PEOPLE
- THEY DON'T **WANT** TO MAKE NEW FRIENDS
  – A **FEW** WILL BE GURU-TYPE EXPLORERS, BUT THEY DON'T CARE ABOUT FRIENDSHIP MUCH **ANYWAY**

- IF YOU PLAY A **MATURE** MMO AS A **NEW** PLAYER, HOW DO YOU GET TO **KNOW** ANYONE?
- HOW DO YOU **NETWORK**?
- IT'S **VERY** DIFFICULT TO BE ACCEPTED INTO A GROUP IF EVERYONE ELSE IN IT HAS KNOWN EACH OTHER FOR **YEARS**
- IT'S NOT THAT THEY'RE **UNWELCOMING**, IT'S THAT THEY HAVE DIFFERENT **AGENDAS**
  - THEY'LL BE HAPPY FOR YOU TO JOIN THEIR GUILD, BUT IF THEY'RE RUNNING HELL-LEVEL **RAIDS** AND YOU'RE STILL **KILLING 10 RATS**, YOU'LL BE SIDELINED

- HOW CAN DESIGNERS HELP **EASE** NEW PLAYERS INTO **CLOSED**, ESTABLISHED SOCIAL GROUPS?
  - **WRONG** QUESTION!
- HOW CAN DESIGNERS HELP NEW PLAYERS FORM THEIR **OWN** SOCIAL GROUPS?
  - **RIGHT** QUESTION!
- THE **STRENGTH** OF ESTABLISHED GROUPS IS THAT THE PLAYERS **ARE** FRIENDS HENCE THE NAME
- **DISRUPTING** THESE RELATIONSHIPS WITH NEW BLOOD **BREAKS** THEM, IT DOESN'T BREATHE NEW **LIFE** INTO THEM

- **MIXING** GROUPS **DOESN'T** WORK
  - IF A TASK **REQUIRES** A NEWBIE, AN OLDBIE WILL JUST USE AN **ALT** TO DO IT
- **SIDEKICKING** (BEING GIVEN TEMPORARY LEVEL AND GEAR GAINS) **ALSO** DOESN'T WORK
  - FEW **NEWBIES** WHO DO IT ARE THERE FOR THE **LONG**-TERM
- NETWORKS WITH **MENTORS** LIKE IN *FINAL FANTASY XIV* DON'T WORK
  - THEY'RE DOMINATED BY **BOASTFUL** HIGH-END PLAYERS TALKING ABOUT **CONTENT** NEWBIES WON'T EVEN **SEE** FOR MONTHS

- **L**OOKING **F**OR **G**ROUP SYSTEMS, WHICH ARE **SUPPOSED** TO HELP, **DON'T**
  - PLAYERS **DO** MEET OTHER PLAYERS, BUT ONLY **TRANSIENTLY** AND WITH NO REASON TO **BOND**
- BONDING **REQUIRES** THAT PLAYERS:
- 1) CAN **COMMUNICATE**
  - IF IT'S **HARD**, LIKE IN *NEW WORLD*, THAT'S A **BIG** PROBLEM
- 2) CAN USE **RECIPROCITY** TO **BUILD** RELATIONSHIPS
  - ESCALATING BACK-AND-FORTH INTERACTIONS

- RECIPROCITY IS WHAT **BUILDS** FRIENDSHIPS **DYNAMICALLY**

- IT WORKS THROUGH A **FOUR-STEP** SERIES OF INTERACTIONS

- STEP 1: **OPENING**

  - PLAYER #1 **PERFORMS** AN OPENING ACTION THAT PLAYER #2 **OBSERVES**

  - THIS ACTION HAS A **COST** TO IT IN TERMS OF TIME, SKILL, INVESTMENT, OTHER FOLKS` OPINIONS

- THE BALL IS NOW IN **PLAYER #2**'S COURT

- STEP 2: **OPPORTUNITY**
  - PLAYER #2 HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO RESPOND
  - IF THEY **CAN'T** RESPOND, THE INTERACTION **ENDS**
- STEP 3: **RESPONSE**
  - PLAYER #2 PERFORMS AN ACTION THAT **ACKNOWLEDGES** PLAYER #1
  - THIS ACTION MUST **ALSO** HAVE A COST
- STEP 4: **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**
  - PLAYER #1 RECOGNISES **RECEIPT** OF PLAYER #2'S RESPONSE AND THE LOOP **COMPLETES**

- THE LOOP CAN BE **BROKEN** IF, IN STEP #3 OR STEP #4, THE PLAYER EITHER **DOESN'T** RESPOND OR DOES SO **INAPPROPRIATELY**
  - THE APOCRYPHAL TOM CRUISE IN A BAR ANECDOTE
- IT CAN **ESCALATE** IF IN STEP #3 OR STEP #4 A PLAYER OPENS UP A **NEW** LOOP
- IT MOVES THE RELATIONSHIP **FORWARD**
- EACH LOOP TAKES **SECONDS** INITIALLY BUT YOU NEED **THOUSANDS** TO DEVELOP A FRIENDSHIP
  - LATER LOOPS TAKE MORE **TIME** AND **EFFORT**, TOO

- THE **SOLUTION** TO BONDING (AND SO GROUP FORMATION) IS TO DESIGN THE EARLY MMO EXPERIENCE AROUND THE IDEA OF **COHORTS**
- PUT **ALL** YOUR **NEW** PLAYERS **TOGETHER** ON THE **SAME** SERVER
  - OLD PLAYERS WITH NEW CHARACTERS ARE OPTIONAL
- HAVE CONTENT THAT **PROMOTES** OR EVEN **ENFORCES** GROUPING
- TRY TO **GROUP** PLAYERS WITH OTHERS WHO **REGULARLY** PLAY AT THE **SAME** TIME
  - AND SPEAK THE **SAME** NATURAL LANGUAGE

- THIS IS HOW **SCHOOLS** WORK
- SCHOOLS HAVE **TEACHERS** WHO CAN IDENTIFY **WHO** GETS ALONG WITH **WHOM**, THOUGH
- WE **CAN'T** DO THAT, BUT WE **CAN** LET PLAYERS SAY WHETHER THEY WANT TO GROUP WITH ANOTHER PLAYER AGAIN
  - IF IT'S A **NO**, YOU DON'T GET PUT INTO THE SAME GROUP IF AT ALL POSSIBLE
  - IF IT'S A **YES**, YOU WILL UNLESS THE OTHER PLAYER HAS SAID NO TO YOU
- **THIS** IS HOW **BONDS** AND FRIENDSHIPS FORM

- THIS "DO/DON'T GROUP WITH AGAIN" MECHANISM WORKS EVEN **WITHOUT** COHORTS
  - IF YOU **LIKE** SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T DISLIKE YOU, YOU HAVE A HIGHER CHANCE OF PLAYING WITH THEM AGAIN
- THE MMO'S **LFG** MECHANISM CAN PUT PEOPLE WHO AREN'T IN SOCIAL UNITS **TOGETHER**
  - THAT **PICK-UP GROUP** COULD **BECOME** A GUILD
- PLAYERS WHO DON'T **WANT** TO BE IN A GUILD **EVER** CAN SET A FLAG TO SAY SO
  - THEN THEY'LL BE GROUPED AS **NORMAL**

- WHY DO **NO** MMOS DO THIS? IT'S EASY!
- WELL, THE **MAIN** REASON IS THAT THEIR DESIGNERS HAVEN'T **THOUGHT** ABOUT IT
  - WHEN **THEY** PLAY, IT'S WITH **FRIENDS**
  - THEY **DON'T** PLAY AS NEWBIES
  - THEY **DON'T** GET THE NEWBIE EXPERIENCE
  - THEY **NEVER** HAD THE PROBLEM NEWBIES HAVE
- THEY'RE DESIGNING FOR **THEMSELVES**, RATHER THAN DESIGNING FOR **PEOPLE**
- THEY **USE** PLAYER TYPES WITHOUT **UNDERSTANDING** THE **MESSAGE**

- MMOS HAVE A MAKING-**FRIENDS** PROBLEM
  - SOCIALISERS WHO CAN'T MAKE FRIENDS **LEAVE**
  - SOCIALISERS WHO **ALREADY** HAVE FRIENDS DON'T NEED **MORE**
- **MOST** PLAYERS OF THE ELDER GAME ARE SOCIALISERS OF THE ALREADY-HAVE-FRIENDS KIND
- THIS PROBLEM IS **EASY** TO FIX, THOUGH!
  - *E.G.* USE **COHORTS** TO INTRODUCE NEWBIES TO OTHER NEWBIES
- ALL IT TAKES IS TO RECOGNISE THAT THERE **IS** A PROBLEM IN THE FIRST PLACE!

REFERENCES

- MY PLAYER TYPES PAPER
  - HTTPS://MUD.CO.UK/RICHARD/HCDS.HTM
- DESIGNING VIRTUAL WORLDS FREE PDF
  - HTTPS://MUD.CO.UK/RICHARD/DESIGNINGVIRTUALWORLDS.PDF
- A 2-MINUTE ANIMATION SHOWING HOW THINGS ONCE WERE IN WOW
  - HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=S5HZH43K330
- SOCIAL DESIGN PRACTICES FOR HUMAN-SCALE ONLINE GAMES FROM PROJECT HORSESHOE
  - HTTPS://LOSTGARDEN.HOME.BLOG/2018/12/29/SOCIAL-DESIGN-PRACTICES-FOR-HUMAN-SCALE-ONLINE-GAMES/