

WHY PEOPLE PLAY MMORPGS

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INTRODUCTION

- THIS TALK CONCERNS **MASSIVELY MULTIPLAYER ONLINE ROLE-PLAYING GAMES**
 - **MMORPGS** TO THE PLAYERS
 - OR MMOGS, MMOS, PWS, MUDS, MUGS, MU*S, ...
 - **VIRTUAL WORLDS** TO ACADEMICS
 - OR SYNTHETIC WORLDS, VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENTS, ...
- MY AIM HERE IS TO EXPLAIN **WHY** PEOPLE PLAY THEM
 - BECAUSE, HEY, THEN WE GET BETTER ONES!
- GET COMFY, IT'S A **LONG** JOURNEY...

WHAT ARE VWS?

- VIRTUAL WORLDS ARE **PLACES**
- BEING PLACES, THEY HAVE A NUMBER OF PLACE-LIKE **FEATURES**
 - YOU CAN **VISIT** THEM
 - **OTHER** PEOPLE CAN **ALSO** VISIT THEM
 - AT THE **SAME TIME**
- THEY ARE, HOWEVER, **NOT REAL**
- THIS SEEMS LIKE A MAJOR **DISADVANTAGE**
 - HOW DO YOU **VISIT** SOMEWHERE THAT **ISN'T REAL?**

ANSWER:

- YOU USE AN **AVATAR**
 - OR, MORE TECHNICALLY SPEAKING, A **CHARACTER**



ABOUT AVATARS

- FAR FROM ITS BEING A **DISADVANTAGE**, PEOPLE OFTEN **LIKE** USING AN AVATAR



FURTHERMORE...

- SOME PEOPLE **PREFER** IT TO REALITY



LEISURE TIME

- PEOPLE PLAY THESE FOR SEVERAL **HOURS** A DAY
 - DAY AFTER DAY
 - MONTH AFTER MONTH
 - YEAR AFTER YEAR...
- I HAVE PLAYERS FOR MY OWN GAME THAT ARE STILL THERE AFTER **19 YEARS**
- SURVEYS HAVE **CONSISTENTLY** SHOWN THAT THE **AVERAGE** TIME A PLAYER SPENDS IN A VIRTUAL WORLD IS AROUND **20 HOURS** A **WEEK**
 - THEY OFTEN INVEST A LOT OF TIME IN IT **OFFLINE**, TOO
- **WHY** DO THEY DO THIS?

WORLD OF WARCRAFT

- *WORLD OF WARCRAFT*, BLIZZARD, 2004:



EVERQUEST

- *EVERQUEST*, SONY ONLINE ENTERTAINMENT, 1999



CONNECTION

- *EVERQUEST* RULED UNTIL *WOW* CAME ALONG
 - 480,000 SUBSCRIPTIONS AT ITS PEAK
- *WOW* IS **MODELLED** ON *EQ*
 - BLIZZARD LOOKED AT *EQ* AND FIGURED **THEY** COULD DO THE **SAME** THING ONLY **BETTER**
 - *EQ*'S AND *WOW*'S UNDERLYING ARCHITECTURE AND PRINCIPLES ARE THE SAME
 - THE ACTUAL **CODE** IS DIFFERENT, THOUGH!
 - MUCH OF THE UNDERLYING **DESIGN** IS THE SAME
 - LEVELS, CLASSES, RACES, COMBAT, GUILDS, ...

DIKUMUD

- *DIKUMUD, COPENHAGEN UNIVERSITY, 1990*

```
lx2l 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.
```

```
lx2l 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
```

CONNECTION

- EQ IS BASICALLY A *DIKUMUD* WITH A **GRAPHICS ENGINE** BOLTED ON
 - THE GAMEPLAY IS PRETTY WELL **IDENTICAL**
 - SO MUCH SO THAT THE DEVELOPERS HAD TO SIGN AN **AFFIDAVIT** TO SWEAR THEY DIDN'T **RIP OFF** ANY ACTUAL *DIKU* CODE!
- EQ'S DESIGNERS HAD PLAYED *DIKUS* EXTENSIVELY AND FIGURED **THEY** COULD DO THE **SAME** THING ONLY **BETTER**
- UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES *ETC* ARE THE SAME

ABERMUD

- **ABERMUD, ALAN COX, 1987**

```
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

>
```

CONNECTION

- **DIKUMUD IS A MORE HARD-CORE FANTASY GAME THAN ABERMUD**
 - THE DESIGN WAS STREAMLINED TO APPEAL TO **ACHIEVERS** (ABOUT WHICH MORE ANON)
 - CAME WITH AN EXTENSIVELY **TESTED** GAME WORLD
 - **RAN** "OUT OF THE BOX"
- **DIKUMUDS DESIGNERS HAD PLAYED ABERMUD EXTENSIVELY AND FIGURED THEY COULD DO THE SAME THING ONLY BETTER**
- **UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES ETC ARE THE SAME**

MUD

- *MUD*, ROY TRUBSHAW & RICHARD BARTLE, 1978

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.

*

- ISN'T SELF-AGGRANDIZEMENT WONDERFUL?

CONNECTION

- *ABERMUD* WAS JUST ONE OF SEVERAL **DOZEN** MUD CLONES OF THE ERA
 - GENERALLY REGARDED AS HAVING **INFERIOR** GAMEPLAY TO THE ORIGINAL
- HOWEVER, IT RAN ON ANY **UNIX** SYSTEM
 - *MUD* ONLY RAN ON **DEC**SYSTEM 10 MAINFRAMES
- IT SPREAD ACROSS THE NET LIKE A **RASH**
- ALAN COX PLAYED *MUD* EXTENSIVELY AND FIGURED **HE** COULD DO *ETC*

PRE-MUD

- THERE WERE **NO** VIRTUAL WORLDS BEFORE *MUD*
 - IT'S THEREFORE OFTEN REFERRED TO AS **MUDI**
- THE CONCEPT OF A VIRTUAL WORLD WAS INVENTED **INDEPENDENTLY** AT LEAST **6** TIMES
 - *MUD, SCEPTRE OF GOTH, AVATAR, ISLAND OF KESMAI, ARADATH, MONSTER*
- *MUD* WAS FIRST, HOWEVER, AND ALMOST **ALL** VIRTUAL WORLDS **DESCEND** FROM IT
 - TRACES OF OTHERS **DO** PERSIST (EXCEPT *AVATAR*)

ORIGINS

- THE THEORY I'M ABOUT TO EXPOUND BEGAN WITH THE QUESTION: "WHAT DO PEOPLE **WANT** OUT OF A MUD?"
 - THIS IS THE **ONLY** REASON I GAVE THAT HISTORY...
- IF YOU ASK, PLAYERS WILL USUALLY REPLY: "TO HAVE **FUN!**"
 - NOT EXACTLY **INFORMATIVE**...
- **MUD2**, NOVEMBER 1989-MAY 1990
 - A BIG DISCUSSION AMONG WIZZES TO ASCERTAIN WHAT PLAYERS DO "TO HAVE FUN"
 - NB: WIZZES AND MORTALS HAVE **DIFFERENT** FUN

PLAYER TYPES

- WHEN I **SUMMARISED** THE DISCUSSION, I FOUND THERE SEEMED TO BE **FOUR** MAIN ACTIVITIES THAT MORTALS FOUND **FUN**:
 - **ACHIEVEMENT** WITHIN THE GAME CONTEXT
 - **EXPLORATION** OF THE GAME
 - **SOCIALISING** WITH OTHERS
 - **IMPOSITION** UPON OTHERS
- LET'S LOOK AT THESE **INDIVIDUALLY**...

TYPE #1

- MOST PLAYERS REGARD VIRTUAL WORLDS AS BEING BASICALLY **GAMES**



ACHIEVERS

- PLAYERS WHO TREAT THE VIRTUAL WORLD AS IF IT WERE A GAME ARE CALLED **ACHIEVERS**
- THEY GIVE THEMSELVES GAME-ORIENTED **GOALS** AND SET OUT TO **ACHIEVE** THEM
- EXAMPLES:
 - FINDING **TREASURE**
 - KILLING **MOBILES**
 - GETTING **POINTS** AND GOING UP **LEVELS**
- ACHIEVERS DO **NOT** LIKE THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS UNDERMINED!

TYPE #2

- SOME PEOPLE JUST LIKE THE **THRILL** OF EXPLORING SOMEWHERE **NEW**



EXPLORERS

- **EXPLORERS** TRY TO DISCOVER AS MUCH AS THEY CAN ABOUT THE VIRTUAL WORLD
- USUALLY BEGIN WITH THE **TOPOLOGY**
 - THE **BREADTH** OF THE VIRTUAL WORLD
- THEN MOVE ON TO THE **PHYSICS**
 - THE **DEPTH** OF THE VIRTUAL WORLD
- **DON'T CARE** ABOUT THEIR **CHARACTER**
- THEY KNOW **MORE** ABOUT THE VIRTUAL WORLD THAN **ANY OTHER** CHARACTER TYPE

TYPE #3

- THROUGH THEIR AVATARS, PLAYERS OFTEN ENJOY **INTERACTING WITH** EACH OTHER



SOCIALISERS

- **SOCIALISERS** USE THE GAME AS A CONTEXT TO **ENGAGE** WITH OTHER PLAYERS
 - THE VIRTUAL WORLD'S **GOINGS-ON** GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO **TALK** ABOUT
- COMMUNICATION IS **ULTRA-IMPORTANT**
 - "WORDS
 - ;PERFORMS SOME DEEDS
- **ROLE-PLAYING** FITS IN HERE
- AN OBVIOUS EXPRESSION OF **COMMUNITY**

TYPE #4

- A FEW PLAYERS ENJOY **ACTING ON** OTHER (USUALLY UNWILLING) PLAYERS...

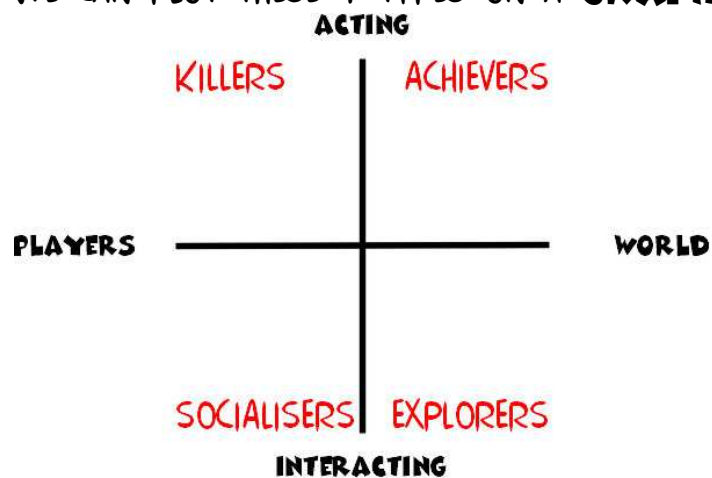


KILLERS

- **TWO SORTS**
 - THOSE WHO IMPOSE THROUGH **KINDNESS**
 - THOSE WHO IMPOSE THROUGH **UNKINDNESS**
- 1ST ARE BUSYBODY, **MOTHER HEN** FIGURES
 - POLITICIANS
 - OFTEN HAVE A **SUPERIORITY COMPLEX**
- 2ND ARE **VILE DREGS** OF HUMANITY
 - GRIEFERS
 - OFTEN HAVE AN **INFERIORITY COMPLEX**

INTEREST GRAPH

- WE CAN PLOT THESE 4 TYPES ON A **GRAPH**:



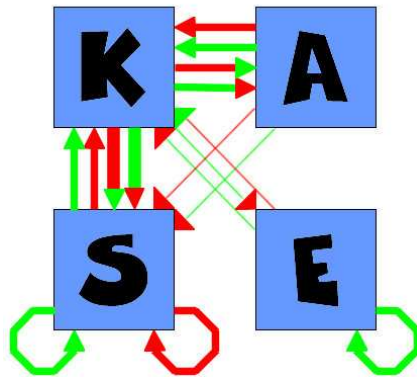
PLAYER INTERACTIONS

- PLAYERS OF DIFFERENT TYPES **INTERACT** WITH ONE ANOTHER
- FOR EXAMPLE, **INCREASING** THE NUMBER OF **KILLERS** WILL:
 - GREATLY **DECREASE** THE NUMBER OF SOCIALISERS
 - HAVE **VERY LITTLE** EFFECT ON THE NUMBER OF EXPLORERS
 - **LOWER** THE NUMBER OF ACHIEVERS
 - WHICH WILL IN TURN **REDUCE** THE NUMBER OF KILLERS UNTIL AN **EQUILIBRIUM** IS REACHED

DYNAMICS

- COMPLETELY ANALYSING **ALL 16** PERMUTATIONS REVEALS HOW THE NUMBER OF PLAYERS OF EACH TYPE CAN BE **CHANGED**
- FOR EXAMPLE, TO **INCREASE** KILLER NUMBERS:
 - INCREASE NUMBER OF ACHIEVERS & SOCIALISERS
 - DECREASE NUMBER OF EXPLORERS
- TO **DECREASE** KILLER NUMBERS:
 - DECREASE NUMBER OF ACHIEVERS & SOCIALISERS
 - INCREASE NUMBER OF EXPLORERS

GRAPH FORM



- GREEN = INCREASE, RED = DECREASE
- LINE = FROM, HEAD = TO, THICKNESS = EFFECT

FOUR TYPES OF VW

- IF WE **RUN** THESE DYNAMICS, WE FIND THERE ARE **FOUR** STABLE TYPES OF VIRTUAL WORLD:
- 1) KILLERS & ACHIEVERS IN EQUILIBRIUM
 - SOCIALISERS FEW AND FAR BETWEEN
- 2) SOCIALISERS HEAVILY DOMINANT
 - KILLING OUTLAWED, ACHIEVEMENT UNDERMINED
- 3) ALL TYPES IN EQUILIBRIUM
 - VERY DIFFICULT TO ORGANISE FROM SCRATCH
- 4) EMPTY GAME...

PAUSE FOR BREATH

- THIS IS A THEORY WITH **APPLICATIONS**
 - HAS BEEN AND **IS BEING** USED IN VW CREATION
- DESIGNERS CAN EXAMINE THEIR WORLD
 - AS IT **IS**
 - AS THEY **WISH** IT TO BE
- ADJUSTMENTS CAN CHANGE **RELATIVE** AND **ABSOLUTE** PLAYER NUMBERS
 - **REBALANCE** AN UNDER-PERFORMING WORLD
 - INCREASE PLAYER **RETENTION**
- BUT CAN IT BE **IMPROVED?**

THE STORY SO FAR...

- THIS 4-TYPE MODEL FOR PLAYERS HAS **FAULTS**
- HOW DO PLAYERS COME TO BE **DIFFERENT** TYPES OVER TIME?
- HOW COME **SOME** OF THESE TYPES HAVE **TWO** TYPES OF PLAYER IN THEM?
- WHY DO WIZ-LEVEL (I.E. ADMIN) PLAYERS **NOT** FIT INTO THE SCHEME?
- **WHY** DO THEY PLAY?

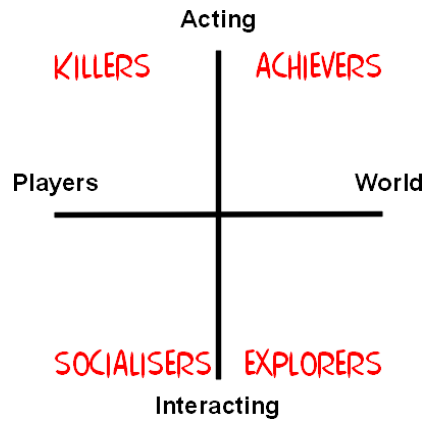
WIZZES

- THE REASON WIZZES **DON'T** FIT INTO THE SCHEME IS BECAUSE FOR THEM, THE PLAYERS AND THE WORLD HAVE BECOME **TWO** SIDES OF THE **SAME** COIN
- THIS MEANS WE CAN'T USE THE **PLAYER/WORLD** AXIS FOR THEM
- HOWEVER, WHEN I FORMULATED THE PLAYER TYPES MODEL I **DID** NOTICE **ANOTHER** AXIS THAT SEEMED TO APPLY TO WIZZES...

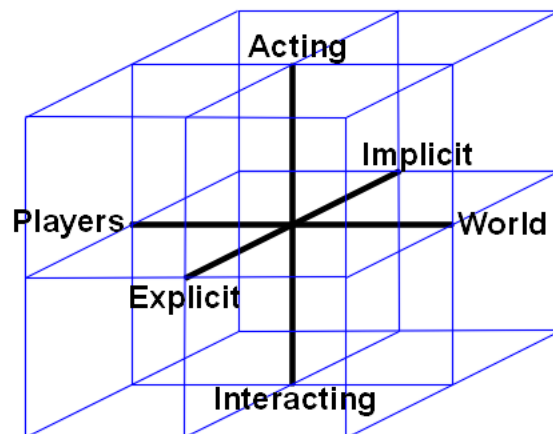
IMPLICIT/EXPLICIT

- SOME WIZZES LIKED ACTING **OVERTLY**, FREELY SHOWING THEIR POWERS TO MORTALS
- OTHERS PREFERRED TO ACT **COVERTLY**, TWEAKING THE WORLD IN SECRET
- OVERT CHANGES APPEARED **EXPLICIT**
- COVERT CHANGES APPEARED **IMPLICIT**
- OVERT/COVERT ISN'T MEANINGFUL FOR MORTALS, BUT WHAT ABOUT IMPLICIT/EXPLICIT?
 - AW, YOU **KNOW** THE ANSWER...

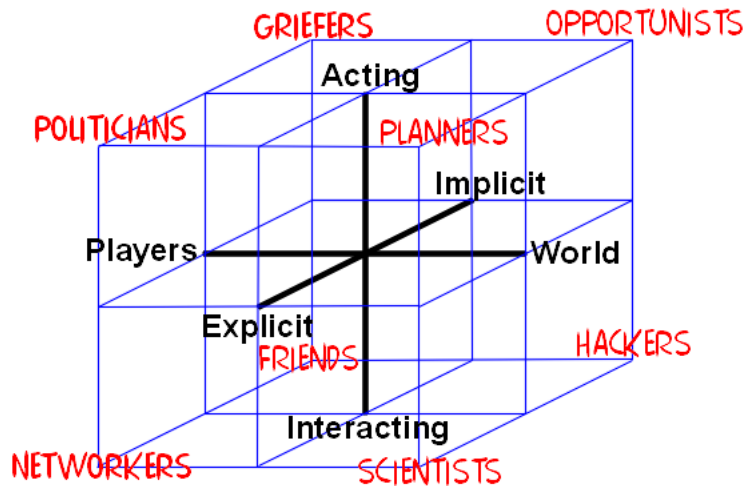
WE GO FROM **THIS**



TO **THIS**



LABELLING THE CUBES...



ACHIEVERS

- OPPORTUNISTS – **IMPLICIT**
 - SEE A CHANCE AND TAKE IT
 - LOOK AROUND FOR THINGS TO DO
 - IF THERE'S AN OBSTACLE, DO SOMETHING **ELSE**
 - FLIT ABOUT FROM IDEA TO IDEA
- PLANNERS – **EXPLICIT**
 - SET A GOAL AND AIM TO ACHIEVE IT
 - PERFORM ACTIONS AS PART OF A LARGER SCHEME
 - IF THERE'S AN OBSTACLE, WORK **ROUND** IT
 - PURSUE THE SAME IDEA DOGGEDLY

EXPLORERS

- SCIENTISTS – **EXPLICIT**
 - EXPERIMENT TO FORM A THEORY
 - USE THEORIES PREDICTIVELY TO TEST THEM
 - METHODOICAL ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE
 - SEEK TO **EXPLAIN** PHENOMENA
- HACKERS – **IMPLICIT**
 - EXPERIMENT TO REVEAL MEANING
 - INTUITIVE UNDERSTANDING, NO NEED TO TEST
 - GO WHERE FANCY TAKES THEM
 - SEEK TO DISCOVER **NEW** PHENOMENA

SOCIALISERS

- NETWORKERS – **EXPLICIT**
 - 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 – **IMPLICIT**
 - INTERACT WITH PEOPLE THEY ALREADY KNOW WELL
 - DEEP/INTIMATE UNDERSTANDING OF THEM
 - ENJOY THEIR COMPANY
 - ACCEPT THEIR LITTLE **FOIBLES...**

KILLERS

- GRIEFERS – **IMPLICIT**
 - ATTACK ATTACK ATTACK!
 - VERY IN-YOUR-FACE
 - UNABLE TO EXPLAIN WHY THEY ACT AS THEY DO
 - VAGUE AIM IS TO GET A BIG, **BAD** REPUTATION
- POLITICIANS – **EXPLICIT**
 - ACT WITH FORETHOUGHT AND FORESIGHT
 - MANIPULATE PEOPLE SUBTLY
 - EXPLAIN SELVES IN TERMS OF USE TO THE VW
 - AIM IS TO GET A BIG, **GOOD** REPUTATION

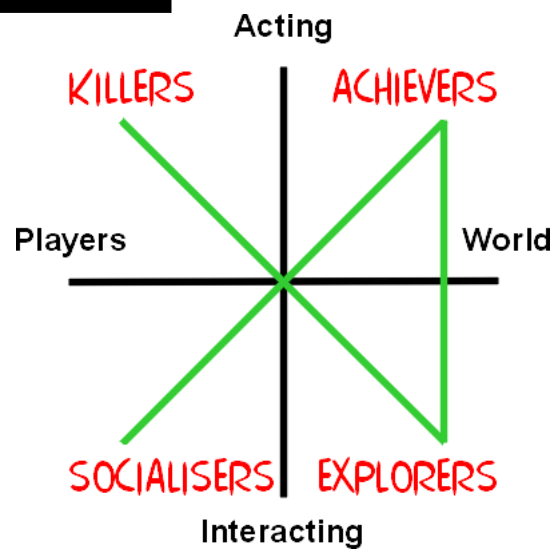
SO WHAT?

- OK, SO **AT LAST** WE CAN EXPLAIN THE TWO SUB-TYPES OF KILLER
- BUT NOTE THAT **IMPLICIT/EXPLICIT** ISN'T THE SAME AS **OVERT/COVERT**
 - WIZZES ARE EITHER **HACKERS** OR **FRIENDS**
 - BUT **STILL** ACT EITHER OVERTLY OR COVERTLY
 - ALTHOUGH THERE **IS** A REASONABLE CORRELATION
- ALSO, THIS NEW MODEL SAYS **NOTHING** ABOUT CHANGES IN PLAYING STYLE
 - YET...

DRIFT

- IT'S **LONG** BEEN KNOWN THAT PLAYERS CHANGE PLAYING STYLE OVER TIME
 - SINCE **BEFORE** PLAYER TYPES CONCEPT EXISTED!
- IN *MUD!*
 - NEWBIES STARTED BY **KILLING** ONE ANOTHER
 - THEN ABANDONED THAT AND WENT **EXPLORING**
 - MOVED ON TO RACKING UP POINTS AND RISING LEVELS - **ACHIEVING**
 - FINISHED AS GNARLED OLD-TIMERS **SOCIALISING**
- **MAIN SEQUENCE** FOR PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

ON THE 2D GRAPH

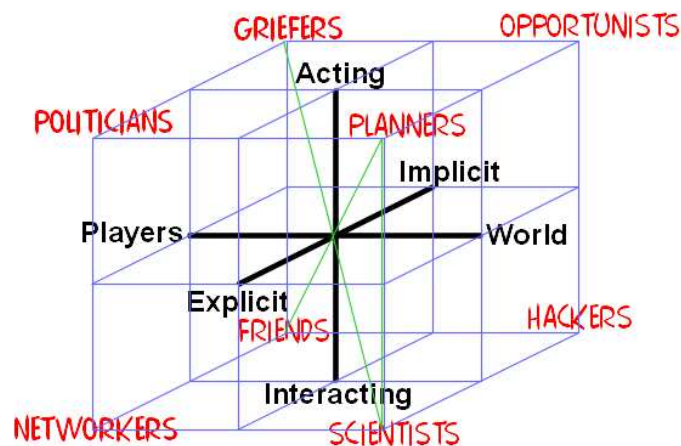


PROBLEMS

- SOME PLAYERS **DON'T** FOLLOW THIS SEQUENCE
 - SOME OSCILLATE **ACHIEVER-->EXPLORER**
 - SOME OSCILLATE **KILLER-->SOCIALISER**
 - SOME ARE ALL over the place
- DOES THE NEW, 3D GRAPH **HELP** ANY?
- YES, IT **DOES**
 - I DON'T THINK THIS ATTEMPT TO BUILD UP **DRAMATIC TENSION** IS WORKING...

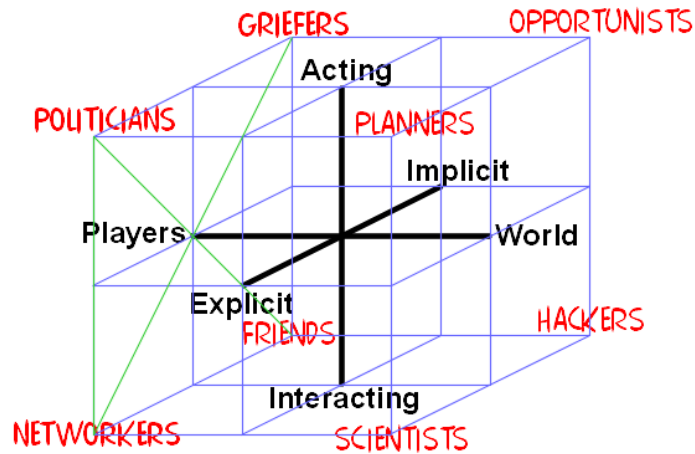
MAIN SEQUENCE

- GRIEFER->SCIENTIST->PLANNER->FRIEND



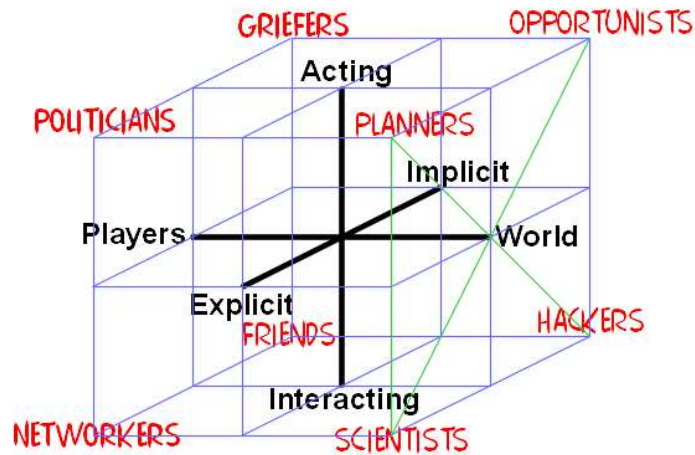
MAIN SOCIALISER SEQUENCE

- GRIEFER->NETWORKER->POLITICIAN->FRIEND



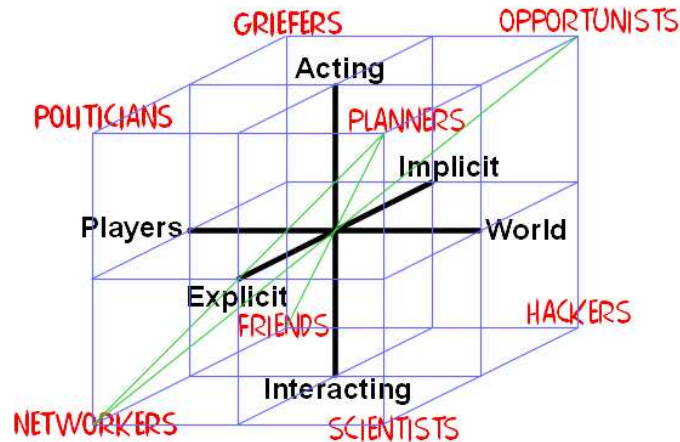
MAIN EXPLORER SEQUENCE

- OPPORTUNIST->SCIENTIST->PLANNER->HACKER



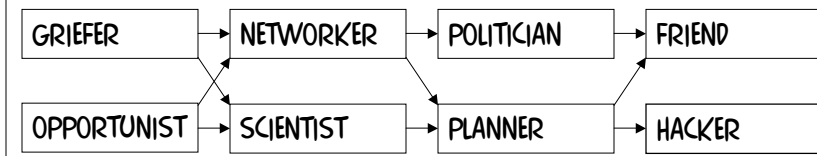
MINOR SEQUENCE

- OPPORTUNIST->NETWORKER->PLANNER->FRIEND



DEVELOPMENT TRACKS

- ALL THESE START OFF **IMPLICIT**, THEN GO **EXPLICIT**, THEN RETURN TO **IMPLICIT**
- PEOPLE **DO** OCCASIONALLY **SWITCH** BETWEEN SEQUENCES, BUT MAINLY **DON'T**
- (SWITCH AT **INTERSECTIONS**)
- WE CAN **COMBINE** THE SEQUENCES TO GIVE **DEVELOPMENT TRACKS**



GENERAL SEQUENCE

- PLAYERS START BY DETERMINING THE **BOUNDARIES** THAT GOVERN THEIR ACTIONS
- NEXT, THEY STRING TOGETHER **MEANINGFUL SEQUENCES** OF PRIMITIVE ACTIONS
- THEN THEY **APPLY** WHAT THEY HAVE LEARNED
- UNTIL EVENTUALLY THEY **MASTER** IT AND IT BECOMES **SECOND NATURE**
- LOCATE->DISCOVER->APPLY->INTERNALISE
 - THRASH, KICK, TODDLE, WALK

ANOTHER PAUSE FOR BREATH

- WHAT WE HAVE NOW IS A MODEL OF HOW PLAYERS **PROGRESS** THROUGH TYPES
 - EVEN IF IT IS A **BIT WEIRD** FOR POLITICIANS
- WHAT DOES THIS **TELL** US, THOUGH
 - WHAT USE IS IT TO **DESIGNERS?**
 - WHAT USE IS IT TO **PLAYERS?**
- IN ITSELF, IT'S OK BUT A BIT **SO WHAT?**
- WELL, IT'S THE **KEY** TO UNDERSTANDING **WHY** PEOPLE PLAY VIRTUAL WORLDS

LET'S LOOK AT MYTH

- MYTH. THAT'S **MYTH**
- PASSED DOWN FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION
- I'M GOING TO **USE** MYTH TO EXPLAIN HOW VIRTUAL WORLD **THEORY** HANGS TOGETHER

- [BLANK LOOKS]

HERO WITH **1K** FACES

- JOSEPH CAMPBELL, 1949: "THE HERO WITH A THOUSAND FACES"
- MYTHS FROM **ACROSS THE WORLD** FOLLOW THE **SAME** BASIC FORMULA
 - THE "HERO'S JOURNEY", OR "MONOMYTH"
- ROOTED IN THE **HUMAN PSYCHE**
 - FROM A UNIVERSAL NEED TO EXPLAIN THE SAME, FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS OF **SOCIAL, WORLDLY** AND **OTHER-WORLDLY** REALITIES
- EFFECTIVELY A **PATH** TO SELF-UNDERSTANDING

EXAMPLES

- **MYTHS** FROM NIGERIA, NORTH AMERICA, AUSTRALIA, PHRYGIA, CHINA, ICELAND, BALI, PERSIA, MEXICO, FINLAND, CAMBODIA, PERU, ...
- THE **EPICS** OF GILGAMESH, ARTHUR, VISHNU, OSIRIS, MOSES, CUCHULAINN, BUDDHA, JASON, ...
- THE *ODYSSEY*, DANTE'S *INFERNO*, *THE SLEEPING BEAUTY*, *ANNA KARENINA*, *FAUST*, *THE FROG PRINCE*, *STAR WARS*, **HARRY POTTER**, ...
- OH, AND **VIRTUAL WORLDS!**
 - NB: THESE AREN'T MENTIONED IN CAMPBELL'S BOOK...

THE BASIC IDEA

- THE HERO'S JOURNEY CONSISTS OF A NUMBER OF **STEPS**, TAKEN IN **ORDER**
 - ALTHOUGH **SOME** LEEWAY FOR STEP EXCHANGES
- VW PLAYERS WANT TO BE **HEROES**
 - BUT THEY'RE RARELY PREPARED TO **ACT** HEROICALLY
 - **FEW** ARE WILLING TO ACCEPT **RISK**
- THEY WANT TO BE **TREATED LIKE** A HERO
- BUT THE **ONLY** WAY TO BECOME A HERO IS TO **COMPLETE** THE HERO'S JOURNEY
- WHY? IT'S A **SEARCH FOR IDENTITY**

DEPARTURE

- THE **CALL** TO ADVENTURE
 - INDICATION OF CHANGE TO COME, OFTEN SYMBOLLIC
- **REFUSAL** OF THE CALL
 - REQUIRED TO ACT BUT WON'T (FEAR, DUTY?)
- **SUPERNATURAL AID**
 - A GUIDE APPEARS TO HELP THEM
- CROSSING OF THE **FIRST THRESHOLD**
 - ENTER WORLD OF ADVENTURE (DEFEAT GUARDIAN?)
- THE **BELLY** OF THE **WHALE**
 - FINAL SEPARATION FROM OLD SELF; REBIRTH

INITIATION

- THE **ROAD OF TRIALS** [USUALLY 3]
- THE MEETING WITH THE **GODDESS**
 - SYMBOLIC; EXPOSURE TO TOTALITY OF KNOWLEDGE
- WOMAN AS THE **TEMPTRESS**
 - OLD-WORLD ORIGINS AT ODDS WITH NEW WORLD
- **ATONEMENT** WITH THE FATHER [KEY POINT]
 - HERO FACES THE SUPREME **POWER** OVER THEM
- **APOTHEOSIS** [PEACE, REST, BLISS]
- THE ULTIMATE **BOON** [OBJECT HERO CAME FOR]

RETURN

- **REFUSAL** OF THE RETURN
- THE **MAGIC FLIGHT**
 - CAN'T STAY **AND** HAVE THE BOON
- **RESCUE** FROM WITHOUT
- CROSSING OF THE **RETURN** THRESHOLD
 - HOW TO RECONCILE THE OLD WITH THE NEW?
- MASTER OF THE **TWO WORLDS**
 - SENSE OF BALANCE, DESTINY ACCEPTED
- **FREEDOM TO LIVE**

EXAMPLE 1

- HERE'S HOW *THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING* FITS THE MONOMYTH
- THE **CALL** TO ADVENTURE
 - ELVEN WRITING APPEARS ON THE RING
- **REFUSAL** OF THE CALL
 - FRODO OFFERS GANDALF THE RING
 - **AND** FRODO OFFERS COUNCIL OF ELROND THE RING
- **SUPERNATURAL** AID
 - GANDALF TELLS FRODO TO LEAVE THE SHIRE
 - **AND** BILBO GIVES FRODO HIS DAGGER & ARMOUR

EXAMPLE 2

- CROSSING OF THE **FIRST THRESHOLD**
 - FRODO LEAVES THE SHIRE
 - **AND** FRODO LEAVES RIVENDELL
- THE **BELLY** OF THE **WHALE**
 - STABBED IN THE BARROWDUNES
- THE **ROAD OF TRIALS** [USUALLY 3]
 - LOTS, *EG.* BALROG
- THE MEETING WITH THE **GODDESS**
 - GALADRIEL

EXAMPLE 3

- WOMAN AS THE **TEMPTRESS**
 - THIS IS THE **MIRROR** OF GALADRIEL
- **ATONEMENT** WITH THE FATHER
 - BOROMIR TRIES TO TAKE THE RING
- **APOTHEOSIS**
 - FRODO ACCEPTS THAT THE RING WILL DESTROY HIM, AND GAINS A KIND OF PEACE
- THE ULTIMATE **BOON**
 - FRODO TAKES THE RING WITH HIM, NOW FULLY KNOWING WHAT IT IS

EXAMPLE 4

- **REFUSAL OF THE RETURN**
 - THIS STEP IS MISSING..!
- IT'S **NOT UNUSUAL** FOR TELLINGS OF THE HERO'S JOURNEY TO
 - MISS A STEP
 - SWAP STEPS
 - REPEAT STEPS
- THE **MAGIC FLIGHT**
 - FRODO FLEES FROM THE ORCS

EXAMPLE 5

- **RESCUE** FROM WITHOUT
 - THE REST OF THE FELLOWSHIP KILL THE ORCS
- CROSSING OF THE **RETURN** THRESHOLD
 - CROSSES THE RIVER ANDUIN
 - (RIVERS OFTEN REPRESENT TIME)
- MASTER OF THE **TWO WORLDS**
 - SAM IS THE OLD WORLD, GOLLUM THE NEW
- **FREEDOM TO LIVE**
 - "ALL WE HAVE TO DECIDE IS WHAT TO DO WITH THE TIME THAT IS GIVEN TO US." – GANDALF

APPLICATION IN VWS

- VW DESIGNERS HAVE KNOWN ABOUT THE HERO'S JOURNEY FOR **SOME TIME**
- VIRTUAL WORLDS HAVE BEEN DESIGNED WITH HERO'S JOURNEY FORMULA **QUESTS**
- BUT THOSE ARE FOR **CHARACTERS**
- IT'S THE **PLAYER** WHO WANTS TO BE THE HERO
- **YOU** DON'T BECOME A HERO **WATCHING** STAR WARS – **LUKE SKYWALKER** DOES

THE "OTHER WORLD"

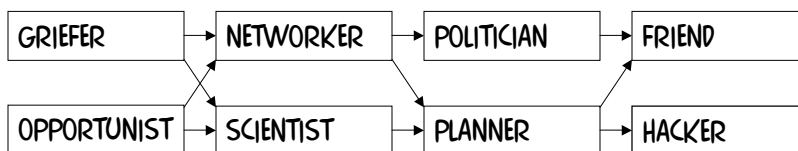
- THE HERO'S JOURNEY INVOLVES
 - LEAVING THE WORLD OF THE **MUNDANE**
 - BECOMING **REBORN** IN AN "OTHER WORLD" OF **DANGER** AND THE **UNKNOWN**
 - RETURNING TO THE WORLD OF THE MUNDANE ARMED WITH **NEW** KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE
 - A RENEWED SENSE OF **SELF**
- SO:
 - REALITY IS THE "MUNDANE WORLD"
 - THE VIRTUAL WORLD IS THE "OTHER WORLD"

VW DEPARTURE

- THE **CALL** TO ADVENTURE
 - ADVERT, ARTICLE, COVER DISK, SHELF UNIT, ...
- **REFUSAL** OF THE CALL
 - EXPENSE, TIME, FEAR OF INADEQUACY, SOCIAL LIFE, ...
- **SUPERNATURAL AID**
 - A FRIEND WHO ALREADY PLAYS, GAME STORE REP, ...
- CROSSING OF THE **FIRST THRESHOLD**
 - INSTALLING THE CLIENT SOFTWARE
- THE **BELLY** OF THE **WHALE**
 - CHARACTER GENERATION SYSTEM

QUICK REMINDER

- THIS DIAGRAM IS FROM **LONG AGO**, SHOWING THE **DEVELOPMENT TRACKS** THAT PLAYERS FOLLOW



VW INITIATION 1

- **THE ROAD OF TRIALS**
 - PLAYER FINDS THEIR FEET
 - OPPORTUNIST/GRIEFER STEP
- **THE MEETING WITH THE GODDESS**
 - PLAYER SEEKS KNOWLEDGE
 - NETWORKER/SCIENTIST STEP
- **WOMAN AS THE TEMPTRESS**
 - TRANSITION FROM LEARNING TO DOING
 - ARE THEY IN IT FOR THE **LONG HAUL?**

VW INITIATION 2

- **ATONEMENT WITH THE FATHER**
 - TRY TO SUCCEED ON THE WORLD'S **OWN TERMS**
 - ACHIEVER/POLITICIAN STEP
 - THE **DESIGNER** IS THE "FATHER"!
- **APOTHEOSIS**
 - UNDERSTAND THE WORLD, ITS PEOPLE, THEMSELVES
 - FRIEND/HACKER STEP
- **THE ULTIMATE BOON**
 - OH DEAR! VIRTUAL WORLDS ARE **VIRTUAL!**
 - I'LL RETURN TO THIS SHORTLY...

VW RETURN 1

- **REFUSAL OF THE RETURN**
 - POWER, RESPECT, FRIENDS - WHY LEAVE?
- **THE MAGIC FLIGHT**
 - COMPELLING ELDER GAME ADDED?
- **RESCUE FROM WITHOUT**
 - PARENTS, WORKMATES, S.O., ...
 - YOUR **EXCUSE** TO LEAVE
- **CROSSING OF THE RETURN THRESHOLD**
 - STOP PLAYING BECAUSE YOU DON'T **NEED** TO PLAY ANY MORE

VW RETURN 2

- **MASTER OF THE TWO WORLDS**
 - **VIRTUAL** SELF AND **REAL** SELF ARE **ONE**
 - VIRTUAL WORLD IS A **PLACE** LIKE ANY OTHER
 - IT'S LOST ITS **mystical significance**
- **FREEDOM TO LIVE**
 - PLAYERS CAN FINALLY BE **THEMSELVES**
 - COMMERCIAL BENEFIT! THEY'LL KEEP THEIR ACCOUNTS **INDEFINITELY**
 - REMEMBER, THAT'S **19 YEARS** FOR SOME *MUD2* PLAYERS - SO FAR!

ANALYSIS

- PLAYING VIRTUAL WORLDS IS A HILL-CLIMBING EXERCISE THROUGH **IDENTITY SPACE**
- THE HERO'S JOURNEY IS A GOOD ALGORITHM FOR FINDING A **LOCAL MAXIMUM**
- **BUT** THE FIT WITH VIRTUAL WORLDS ISN'T **EXACT**
 - AND IT'S **EASY** TO APPLY TO OTHER FISH-OUT-OF-WATER SITUATIONS (COLLEGE, NATIONAL SERVICE, BREAKFAST) – NOT ALL **APPROPRIATE**
- SO WHAT ARE THE **MAIN** PROBLEMS WITH IT?

PROBLEMS

- WOMAN AS TEMPTRESS
 - WHY DOES IT GET ITS **OWN STEP** WHEN THE OTHER TRANSITIONS **DON'T**?
- ATONEMENT WITH THE FATHER
 - MUST BE **POSSIBLE** – THE GAME MUST **END**
 - MUSTN'T BE AUTOMATIC – MUST FEEL **DESERVED**
 - MEASURED **TANGIBLY**, SO HOW DO **POLITICIANS** GAIN ACCEPTANCE?
- THE MAGIC FLIGHT
 - BREAK OUT, OR **FAILURE** TO BREAK BACK IN?

A PROBLEM KINDA SOLVED...

- VIRTUAL WORLDS HAVE NO **BOON**
 - WHAT CAN YOU POSSIBLY **TAKE** FROM A VW?
- ACTUALLY, YOU CAN TAKE **YOURSELF**
 - IN FORMAL TERMS, THE BOON IS **SYMBOLIC** OF YOUR NEW IDENTITY ANYWAY
- **REVERSE** THE ORDER OF **MAGIC FLIGHT** AND **RESCUE FROM WITHOUT**
 - YOU DON'T NEED **HELP** TO LEAVE, YOU NEED AN **EXCUSE** TO LEAVE
- YOU VISIT THE VW TO **BECOME** A HERO, BUT YOU CAN ONLY **BE** A HERO IN THE REAL ONE

SUMMARY

- WE CAN **AT LAST** ANSWER THE QUESTION: **WHY** DO PEOPLE PLAY IN VIRTUAL WORLDS?
- BECAUSE IT'S A **QUEST FOR IDENTITY**
- BY BEING SOMEONE **VIRTUAL**, THEY FIND OUT WHO THEY ARE IN **REALITY**
- WHATEVER THEY'RE DOING AT ANY ONE MOMENT TO **PURSUE** THAT AIM THEY REGARD AS **FUN**
- **THAT'S** WHY THEY PLAY SO MUCH
- AND **THAT'S** WHY VIRTUAL WORLDS ARE **HERE TO STAY**

QUESTIONS

- THIS IS THE PART WHERE NO-ONE HAS ANYTHING TO SAY, AND NORBERT HAS TO THINK UP SOMETHING TO ASK IN ORDER TO SPARE MY EMBARRASSMENT