Game Communities for Learning

The Digest Version
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My Mission:

1. Explain Online Games
2. Explain why they should not be ignored.
3. Look at some related communities.
4. Look at what happens in and around games.
NOT My Mission:

- MMOGs are the (or even *an*) answer.
- We should expect to be able to incorporate and use these ideas tomorrow.
- Models of & technologies in game communities are directly transferable to formal educational settings.
Your Mission:

1. Put these ideas in the back of your head.
2. Go about your professional life.
3. Notice when these ideas come to the fore again.
4. Re-examine them from time to time.
5. Be open to discussions with those involved in these communities.
What’s the diff.? It’s a matter of Scale
A Game
A Multiplayer Game:
A Massively Multiplayer Game
What is an MMOG?

Massively Multiplayer Online Game

MMORPG = Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game
Games the tend to promote strong community structures:

- Traditional Games played online (Bridge, Go, Chess)
- Popular Single Player (often Strategy) Games (eg. CIV III)
- MMOGs (Lineage II, WoW, SWG, FF11…)
- ARGs (The Beast, I Love Bees)
Yea, so?
Who plays Online Games?

- 18-29 = 52%
- 30-49 = 34%
- 50-64 = 28%
- 65+ = 38%
Fun facts to know and tell….

- Average age of MMORPG players is around 26.
- 25% of MMORPG players are teenagers.
- About 50% of MMORPG players **work full-time**.
- About 36% of players are **married**, and 22% have children.

More Fun Facts to Know and Tell….

- On average, MMORPG players spend **22 hours a week** in these environments and usage is not correlated with age.
- 20% of MMORPG players play the game with a **romantic partner**, and 28% play **with a family member**.

[Welcome] Welcome to MapleStory!!

http://www.nickyee.com/daedalus/gateway_demographics.html
What Makes These Games Special?

- Highly graphical
- Social interaction is a key motivator
- Persistent virtual worlds
- Real-time, avail. 24/7
- Loosely structured open-ended narratives
- Players do as they please (!!!)
- Escapist fantasy, yet emergent realism (Kolbert 2001)
The Everquest Economy (in 2001)

Thanks to out-of-game trading of in-game items, Norrath, the virtual setting of *EverQuest*, is the 77th largest economy in the real world, with a GNP per capita between that of Russia and Bulgaria.

One platinum piece, the unit of currency in Norrath, trades on real world exchange markets higher than both the Yen and the Lira (Castronova, 2001).
IRVINE, Calif. - January 10, 2005—Blizzard Entertainment® today announced that *World of Warcraft®* has sold through more than 600,000* units to customers in North America, Australia, and New Zealand.

The fastest-growing massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG) has also shattered all previous concurrency records in North America, achieving over 200,000 simultaneous players during the holiday period.
Wik and the Fable of Souls

- One to watch
- New out 2004
- Indie game award winner
- The game and community is just growing and forming.

http://www.wikgame.com/index.html
Why Should Educators Care?

Game Communities are learning communities.
Why Should Educators Care?

Game Communities are an emergent social phenomenon – not a passing fad.
Why Should Educators Care?

Game Communities form a significant element of youth culture.

http://www.lineage2.com
What Can we Learn?

- Directly
- Indirectly
Evolving Communities of Practice
World of Warcraft

http://www.worldofwarcraft.com/
More Information on MMOGs:

- The Dedalus Project (Psychology of MMORPGs)
- Constance A. Steinkuehler (U Wisconsin @ Madison MMOG researcher)
  [https://mywebspace.wisc.edu/steinkuehler/web/](https://mywebspace.wisc.edu/steinkuehler/web/)
- Elizabeth Kolbert, New Yorker Article: FACT, 2001
  [http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?010528fa_FACT](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?010528fa_FACT)
Civilization III - Links

- Homepage: http://www.civ3.com/
- Fansites: http://www.civ3.com/fansites.cfm
  - http://www.geocities.com/civgamers/
- Features: http://www.civ3.com/features.cfm
- Teacher Features: http://www.firaxis.com/community/teacher.php
World of Warcraft (mmog) - Links

- Home: http://www.worldofwarcraft.com
- Community Site: http://www.worldofwarcraft.com/info/index.html;jsessionid=B0027B5A64017FFA7B41320C6FE6FC8B.app01
- Blizzard Entertainment: http://www.blizzard.com/
WIK the Fable of Souls

- Home:
- Reflexive.net site:
Maple Story - Links

Augmented Reality Games

An alternate reality game is a cross media game that deliberately blur the line between the in-game and out-of-game experiences. While games may primarily be centered around online resources, often events that happen inside the game reality will "reach out" into the players' lives in order to bring them together.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alternate_Reality_Game
Augmented Reality Games:

- About ARGs: http://deaddrop.us/
- Jane McGonigal (ARG research): http://www.avantgame.com/
- Paper: Towards Augmented Reality Gaming (Thad Starner, Bastian Leibe, Brad Singletary, Kent Lyons, Maribeth Gandy, and Jarrell Pair) http://www.cc.gatech.edu/ccg/publications/imagina2000/
- The Unreasonable Man: http://www.unreasonableman.net/2004/04/augmented_reali.html
- Parsec Project: http://parsecproject.com/archives/_augmented-reality-for-hal.html
Thanks!

Image & Background Credits & Sources:
- Game sites: WoW, MS, Lineage II, SWG, Wik, Civ III, NWN, FF, Matrix, Syberia (images include downloadable screenshots, player & publisher wallpapers)
- Downloadable images from: http://www.gamewallpapers.com/
- Personal photos taken @ E3