Project Idea

Name: TBC

The idea that the Holy Pirates want to bring to life is a virtual world platform that is part MMO and part social shared space.

Taking inspiration from various fictional virtual worlds from different forms of media, the shared social space is a graphical take on social media that many authors thought the next iteration of the internet might look like. It is a space for users to interact with each other via customisable avatars, graphical interpretations of the users. Users would communicate through voice chat or text-based chat, using text-to-speech and universal translation to allow for international communication.

In this social space, not only can users have their own personal spaces, but groups can also have their own spaces as well. Groups can take on the form of clans, that can interact with the MMO portion of the platform.

The MMO portion of this platform is a living simulation that is influenced by both the users and the artificial intelligence that inhabits these worlds. Users would take their avatars and place them into the MMO and allow them to ‘live’ in these worlds.

The MMO has no set theme. It does not need to be specifically a fantasy action RPG, or a science fictional shooter. And how we can do this is to make it live in seasons: have set timeframes for the life of these worlds seen similarly in competitive gaming. By having rotating seasons, we can rotate the themes and genres in and out, but also have the added benefit of letting these virtual worlds have a beginning, a middle and an end.

There’s always been a problem with long running MMOs in that the majority of all users will experience the same content. The quests will be the same. The enemies will be the same. Rarely will a new user be the first to experience something unique. But with each new season, new worlds (i.e. servers) would be introduce, with procedurally generated content at first, but with AI that constantly ‘live’ through the course of the season, no two experiences would be the same.

Throughout the lifetime of the season, the world itself will grow allowing more content to be introduced. And as more content is accessed, more and more players will get to interact with each other, and players can choose to take on an active or passive role in these worlds; to engage with or against these other players, or to mingle with the AI and interact only with the virtual space of the world itself only. They can choose to take a hostile or friendly approach to those they meet (these are approaches that can also apply to the AI NPCs as well) and everything gamut in between. And as these worlds grow, they would start to merge with the other populated worlds of the season, allowing more interaction between both players and NPCs.

As the season comes to an end, worldwide events can be introduced allowing the season to end with a bang. These could be cataclysmic in nature with players fighting for survival, or maybe a resigned and melancholy end. When the season reaches it climax, ‘fragments’ of these worlds are given back to the players as keepsakes in their social spaces, and a new season starts, with fresh slate and theme for players to participate in.

Players can freely hop between this social space and the MMO space.

There could be a metatextual component to the MMO within the social space as well. Like how users can take up either an active or passive role in the MMO, they can also do this in the context of the MMO being competitions or levels, with the more active players gaining points on scoreboards. The higher the score, the more recognisable the user is in the social space. Users can be more passive and interact with events and activities in the social space that could be considered ‘games’ rather than ‘competition’. In that sense, the MMO would actually be a game inside the actual MMO, the social space.

Finally, we want to touch on the topic of interfacing with the platform. We want our platform to be as far-reaching as possible, so how would we do that? We would create a client that tries to answer one question: can it run Doom[[1]](#endnote-1)? Mobile device technology has gotten really advanced, but there are still at least 4 concerns to address: battery life; connectivity; graphical fidelity; and storage space.

Having the client side handle most of the data (textures, sound, music) might alleviate the problem of huge amounts of data being transmitted over networks, but in games these things are probably one of the main culprits for the size of games ballooning these days. So to address some of these concerns we have decided the graphical options for the platform to be a a 3 level scale: voxel/cel-shading-based graphics for at least mobile devices and platforms; and a low poly based graphics (re:Minecraft-like) and realistic 3D graphics for high end machines, but the underlaying interactions would be the same on all clients. The user might see different interpretations on their devices, but the platform is still doing the same thing underneath.

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---SOME THOUGHTS---

I originally had a 3rd component that was AR based with real world interactions (using Ned and my ideas) but though it my have been overkill.

Overall, these should be enough here to cover pretty much every week’s content here (ethics, cloud computing, AI, etc.)

If the social space might be too much, we could probably role that back and just focus on the MMO side of things. I think that idea should be strong enough on its own.

BUT…

Looking at the Assignment 3 doc, our idea might be a tad larger than the scope that’s in there…

Below: Random thoughts to be removed or added in.

MMO -> Virtual World -> Metaverse

Ever changing worlds

AI NPCs with machine learning

Semi-procedurally generated content

PVP

Social

Worlds

Growth

Input device and access (Human interface device)/remote access/platforms) Clients

Low graphical fidelity client devices

Siloing off account privileges

Real world overlay? (Ned’s idea)

Issues

Weeks 3 - 11

1. https://motherboard.vice.com/en\_us/article/qkjv9x/a-catalogue-of-all-the-devices-that-can-somehow-run-doom [↑](#endnote-ref-1)