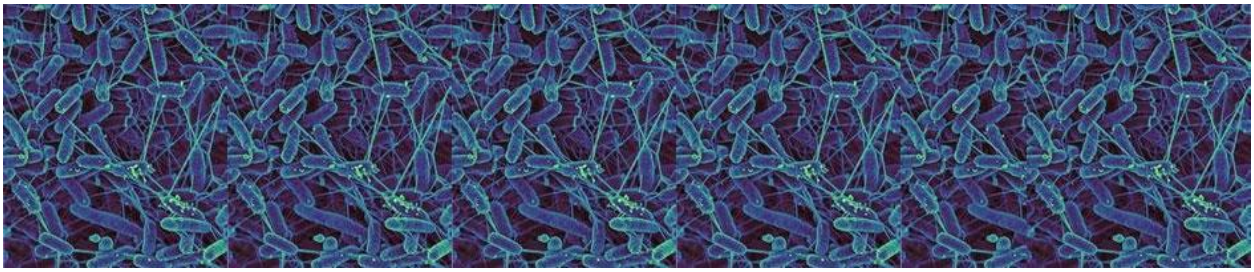

" Pathogens Against the Body" is a conceptual interactive game that gives your Pathogen Avatar the power to fight the body to cause maximum damage! **Create Your Pathogen Avatar … and …. Tell Us Your Design Ideas** What we've outlined here is only the beginning. Your pathogen avatar will interact in the world of the canine body; the whole body, from the tip of its nose to the tip of its tail. Your pathogen avatar begins by entering the body world as your pathogen would in real life. Once inside the canine body world, your pathogen avatar takes on powers, many as it would have in real life, to attack the body. And the body fights back as the body would in real life... perhaps by posing an immune response sending out Macrophages to engulf you. As the fight continues; you use your powers to overcome the body - you prolifically reproduce, you try to enter cells and take over their machinery; and the body uses its powers to overcome you. Your goal is to provide maximum damage to the body, which may mean Death, as your pathogen might in real life. What are examples of powers your pathogen avatar possesses? How does your pathogen avatar use these powers to inflict maximum damage on the body? And, when maximum damage is inflicted, what should your reward be? How can your pathogen avatar work in concert with your friend's pathogen avatars to advance the game? What to you would make this game fun?

For your inspiration, here are some examples of pathogen avatars…

Some really bad guys

Some cartoony characters

and...
Some really scary viruses

So let's begin to create your avatar...

Things you'll need:

Pencil and Paper
A Graphics drawing program like Adobe Photoshop or Illustrator, or Corel Painter
OR
An online drawing program like QueekyPaint or Slimber Painter
OR
An avatar creation program like Poser

Steps:

1. Pick your pathogen.

   There are lots of places you can find pictures of pathogens, like text books and online resources. Wikipedia has a list of dog diseases.

2. Using pencil and paper, sketch what you would like your pathogen to look like - get the general shape first, then add features.
3. These websites, How to Draw a Character and How to Create an Avatar Character can help you out - they have some really good tips.
4. After you get the major characteristics of your pathogen avatar down, you'll want to render it in a graphics program such as those suggested in the *Things you'll need* list.

   Here are a couple of websites that show you how to draw a character online. The first, *How to Draw the Eye of the Beholder*, steps you through drawing a

many eyed monster; and the second, *How to Draw a Monster*, steps you through drawing a monster with big eyebrows.

5. Post your pathogen avatar in the comments - We'd love to see what you created!

   And tell us about your pathogen avatar's powers -- what they are and how your avatar uses them to inflict maximum damage on the body.

Integrating Social Media Games and eLearning Applications

As designers of educational games, we all know that today, students want to share their knowledge and are eager to collaborate with each other. We know the information needs to be relevant; we know the experience needs to be fun. What are some ways that Social Media can be incorporated into this animal anatomy and physiology eLearning application, or perhaps into any eLearning application centered on a scientific discipline?
One way is through an educational game...

" Pathogens Against the Body" pits pathogen avatars against the canine body. This conceptual interactive game is based upon SecondLife, but is applied to anatomy and physiology. The model for the game would be 'pathogen against body' where the student would create an avatar representing a particular pathogen (for example, a microbe or parasite), and the system would represent the body. To enhance the educational level of the game, the avatar the student builds, would be a creative representation of the pathogen of choice, but would at the same time be restricted to possess the defining characteristics of the pathogen in real life. For example, if the pathogen of choice is streptococcus, the avatar would have to approximate a spherical body. The goal for the pathogen player is to inflict maximum damage, in a manner analogous to how the pathogen of choice does so in real life, upon the body system which will defend itself as it would in real life.

Other ideas I have to incorporate Social Media into application specific areas are:

- **Wiki** Students could edit academic anatomy and physiology information. Although the contributed information would need to be moderated to ensure its validity, a wiki would provide a way for students to focus on principles they find most important or most challenging, and to express those principles in their own words.

- **Blogs and Forums** Students could blog about their clinical experiences. They could ask questions as well as provide advice and information in a forum. Relevant photos and videos could be uploaded to both blogs and forums.

- **Bulletin Board** Students could use the bulletin board as a study aid both on an individual level and at a collaborative level. Snippets of information could be dragged from sources within the application and dropped onto the student's bulletin board work space. These snippets could include topic discussions, animated diagrams, and videos. They could also include the diagrams the student colored and labeled in an interactive color function of the application. Perhaps snippets could be dropped and dragged from the web in general as well. In addition, student's would be able to add their own notes to the snippets. At the collaborative level students could share the content of their bulletin board work spaces amongst themselves.

Are these viable solutions? What are their pros and cons? How can they be improved?
In addition to the examples cited, what other ways can Social Media and eLearning applications be integrated?

Credits
banner: blue-connections.jpg from http://wired.com "microbes may be more networked than you are";
"Pathogens Against the Body" thumbnail: a composite taken from http://microbemagic.ucc.ie/about_microbes/good_bad_ugly.html and http://www.mcphee.com/shop/product_images/l/571/m6080__99572_zoom.jpg;
really bad guys: http://www.oregonlive.com/health/index.ssf/2009/05/were_covered_by_trillions_of_b.html;
cartoony characters: http://microbemagic.ucc.ie/about_microbes/good_bad_ugly.html;
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