

AJ Ryan

Relationships in Phantasy Star Online

Task-oriented is how I would summarize most interactions in-game in Phantasy Star Online. After creating a party, players usually wait for other players to join before starting a mission. Whether the task is killing a certain boss or farming for a certain item drop, players generally have an objective in mind when creating a party.

Two popular missions on the Ultima server are "Towards the Future" and "Wrath of Forest." When creating parties players will often title the party "TTF" or "WOF." Also worth noting the missions were not in the original game and were created for private servers. "Towards the Future" is a boss rush mission where players need to beat the four bosses of Episode 1 along with some short dungeons as fast as possible. "Wrath of Forest" has players killing a horde of forest monsters. Both missions serve a specific purpose. "Towards the Future" is a mission played to quickly gain experience points while "Wrath of Forest" yields less experience per minute but has a higher chance of spawning rare monsters for rare drops due to the amount of monsters that spawn. These missions have been consistently popular since I started playing Phantasy Star Online on private servers 7 years ago.

In the lobby outside of missions, the game is casual. Often players will not do anything except to trade with each other and give away rare drops. Since the game is class-based with no option to change your class later, players usually have no problem giving up rare drops they can't use. I've chatted with other players about everything from their dogs to my schoolwork. In general the community is friendly and no topic is off-limits. Also since the game is played worldwide you can get some interesting perspectives on certain topics.

I'd like to share a story about Phantasy Star Online back in its Dreamcast days. The story is not about me but rather a longtime forum friend of mine. We'll call him Rico. Rico loves the Dreamcast but has not nearly as many hours in any Dreamcast game as Phantasy Star Online. He's leveled up a few characters to max level. Anyways, one day while playing, he comes across a Force player. He's a Hunter and both made for a good party.

Rico started talking to the Force player and found out she's from the same country. Due to the slight inconvenience of PSO chat, they added each other on AOL Instant Messenger (AIM, a relic of the past) and began to talk on AIM every day, first about the game but later about everything. Eventually they started to call each other as well. Long story short, Rico married the Force player (in real life) and they've been together for almost 15 years now!