MicroCosm features and components, 26-September-1985

A full, finished system will include the following elements (note the numbers as we'll use those to refer back to the items).

1) Baseline home system (resident on C64, Amiga). Includes graphics for rendering backgrounds, scenery, objects, avatar animation, and close-up screens; basic sound effects for avatars and objects; interactive avatar control interface; communications protocol handler for interaction with dial-up host using 300 baud Commodore modem; core/disk object memory cache manage; object behavior modules for objects essential to system operation (notably the avatars themselves, objects relating to the mail and inter-player communications systems, and the basic generic routines for important broad categories of objects, such as containers and vehicles).

2) Home system communications enhancement (resident on C64, Amiga). Adds support for 1200 baud modem and high-speed link to central host.

3) Home system avatar graphics enhancement (resident on C64, Amiga). Adds graphics support so that avatars may have additional forms besides the basic humanoid shape (e.g., weird aliens, dogs & cats, birds, fish heads, etc.).

4) Basic object set (resident on C64, Amiga, with matching support routines resident on the central host). This is the set of object behavior modules and imagery for the basic collection of common objects that everyone knows about. Includes such things as trees, houses, clothing, weapons, automobiles, money, furniture, food, rocks, etc.

5) Advanced object set (available for C64, Amiga, stored on the central host and downloadable on demand, with matching support routines resident on the central host). This is the set of object behavior modules and imagery for the more extensive collection of objects any one of which will only be encountered by a small subset of the player population. Includes rare treasures, specialized tools, unusual buildings, and so on. It is foreseen that this set of objects will grow continuously as the system matures with use.

6) Avatar personality kit (available for C64, Amiga). Interactive package to allow a player to customize the appearance of his avatar. Will allow him to change the body shape, body type, proportions, coloration, etc.

7) Turf builder kit (available for C64, Amiga). Interactive package to allow a player to customize the appearance and arrangement of his turf. Will allow him to place buildings, walls, furniture, doors, windows, booby-traps, and other household artifacts, and alter their positions, color, proportions, and so on.

8) Baseline host system (resident on central host machine). All the software to make the universe work with multiple players. Includes Looi(TM), the Low Overhead Object Interpreter, which handles all access to the host object database and controls execution of the host resident portion of the object behavior modules; communications handlers to manage communications with a large number of simultaneous participants using the system; message switcher to routine communications from one player to another; transaction processor to mediate between the various players and Looi; and the other components necessary to the basic functioning of the system.

9) Host support routines for basic object set. Software modules to handle the part of the basic object set which must reside in the host.

10) Host support routines for the advanced object set. Ditto.

11) Third-party object creation kit. Software package to allow third-party software developers to create objects that will reside in the MicroCosm system. This package will enable others to extend the universe itself by adding new elements for players to encounter and manipulate. Includes documentation and standards; tools for programming object behavior modules on the C64 and Amiga and installing imagery to go with the objects thus created; and matching tools for programming the corresponding host-resident object routines.

12) Third-party gateway creation kit. Software package to allow third-party software developers to use the MicroCosm universe as a gateway into other, unrelated software running on the host system (e.g., EA's two-player network Archon game). Includes documentation and standards; and software tools for plugging their programs into the MicroCosm infrastructure.

The Hypercrunch mode scenario delivers:

15-March-1986: #1, some of #4, #8 and some of #9

1-June-1986: #2, rest of #4, some of #5, rest of #9, some of #10, #11 and #12

#3, the rest of #5, #6, #7, and the rest of #10 come later as ramp-down tasks or as separate followup projects.

The Semicrunch mode scenario delivers:

1-June-1986: #1, #4, partial #6, partial #7, #8 and #9

1-August-1986: #2, maybe #3 (if it can be done), #5, #6, #7, #10, #11 and #12