Invisible networks 2022

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Invisible networks

Invisible networks is a writing jam organized by ctrlcreep: "Invent a weird/magical/ terrifying social network every day".

Day 01: Slime computations

For their calculations, slimes use soft numbers. They use them to represents shapes and colors, sounds and tastes, genre and ages.

Slime can change at will as long as they know the right number, their scholars know thousands of them.

New numbers are found in the odd words they visit, or in the dreams of adventurers they consume, but nobody really knows how they appear first. There are several theories about it, each one expressed by its own numbers, but nothing is sure yet.

They use the ether for long-distance exchanges, forming small cliques. Each group meets in its own carved place. Some of these places look like fly markets, other like thieves dens, swayed by the numbers.

They scheme to steal numbers from other, recruiting other lifeforms to help them.

Non-slime can't perceive the numbers and they see the ether as empty caverns. They rarely go there, unless a slime enlist them.

Day 02: Psyche sort

Since last year, HR have been obsessed by *Psyche Sorting*™.

Psyche Sorting™ is "a new infallible new methodology to classify the human resources" of your organization, separating high achievers from commoners.

All the human resources of your organization are sorted, from the highest achiever to the lowest.

Unless other approaches, *Psyche Sorting*™ ensure that the classification is correct, and *will stay correct* indefinitely.

Most HR tools are only working on thee measuring aspect. Event if the measure is accurate when it is done, people are adapting and changing with time, which leads to an increasing error risk.

Psyche sorting™ doesn't only measure the human resources, but also manage them.

When a human resource joins your company, the *Psyche Sorting*™ evaluation tool will give them a *Psyche Score*™.

The *Psyche Score*™ is then stored indefinitely on the sub-atomic *Psyche Network*™, with the human resource identity. This data can't then be changed or edited.

The human resource should then be implanted by the *Psyche Device*™. This psycho-mechanical device connects to the *Psyche Network*™, and ensure the validity of the *Psyche Sorting*™.

When a human resource try to act in a manner that isn't conforming to their *Psyche Score*™, the *Psyche Device*™ block the act instantly, without any visible pain. In most cases, the human resource isn't even aware of what has just happened.

This ensure order and unity among the human resources: with *Psyche Sorting*™ human resource management becomes predictable and fair.

Day 03: Goblin marketplace

These last years, goblin marketplaces have become an expected fixture of all human settlements of a significant size, expanding from their southern origins to the whole continent.

Everyone have heard the rumor that all these marketplaces are in fact a single goblin marketplace existing in all the places at the same time through a mysterious mean.

Academics from several schools of magic could have discovered a new kind of spell so far to prove or disprove anything. made jealous by the idea that goblins studied the idea extensively, but failed

But how else could you explain the eerie similarities between all these places: the same second or third hand equipment shops, the same greengrocers, the same "mischief's corner" *café* where you can order the same bog beer *à la mode*.

An economist   as the members of the new school of magic dedicated to the study of money call themselves   finally discovered the answer: the goblin marketplace system is what the goblins call *une franchise*, meaning it's a packaged business model ready to be installed in any place.

A goblin group with a venturing mind can be taught how to operate a marketplace in a few weeks, then buy all the necessary items: the adventuring equipment, the different kind of foods, but also everything needed to build the "authentic" shops.

This explains why all these markets looks the same: they are based on the same blueprints and use the same materials. Everything can be bought in bulk to them provided they pay a fee on everything they sell, and promise to keep the operation secret.

Even the second hand equipment is not stolen from dead adventurers or looted in graveyards anymore, but produced to look this way. This ensure a steady supply flow and remove the physical risks for the goblins, but gone are the romantic feelings of buying a dagger who was probably owned by an unlucky rogue.

Day 04: Kafka's metaverse

The fans of Kafka finally struck back.

Not the fans of the books published against their author's will.

The fan of Franz Kafka, who like him work merely to earn a living, and spend their free time writing, don't finish their long pieces, and enjoy sending them to their friends instead of publishing them.

Kafka's metaverse is a place for them, created and fiercely defended by them.

Writers are welcome, event if they don't write about the alienating tendencies of bureaucracy. As long as they're not focused on fame or readership's size.

If they start to cultivate a large audience, the network will politely make them understand that maybe they should find a better place to go.

The *poète maudits* are tolerated, as long as they don't make too much fuss and let the other have fun.

You can read and comment, or just read. Don't try to help if you're not asked to. Don't talk to all your friends about the new thing you just discovered, one or two should be enough.

Publisher are mercilessly hunted, particularly those that try to convince the authors to publish in their pages.

The creators have been inspired by ancient webrings, but wisely ignored the nostalgia. They don't want to create something large, but don't either fetishize keeping their creation tiny, they make it up as it goes along.

A small internet archipelago of writers and readers.

Day 05: Composite memory palace

Video games continued their expansions, in number and in size.

Knowledges required to master the games grew at the same pace, requiring more and more effort from the gamers.

To meet their demands, video games wiki grew, and become larger and more intricate, the biggest ones dwarfing wikipedia.

When the first bio-mechanical memory extension implant was created, it enabled people to connect their mind to video games wiki and access their content like their own memories.

The market was here, and the wiki standardization simplified the development.

Heavily subsidized by game companies, it became common. Only some hardcore gamers refused it, proclaiming that it created a fake gaming experience.

To be compatible with it, other kind of information started to use the same standard as the video games wiki.

1. General
    1. Controls
    2. Combat
    3. Secrets
2. Character
    1. Classes
    2. Stats
    3. Build Calculator
    4. Builds
3. Equipment & Magic
    1. Weapons
    2. Magic
    3. Armor
    4. Upgrades
4. World
    1. Covenants
    2. Places

      3. NPCs

      4. Enemies

Political programs, religious debates, historical and technical knowledge, all became ubiquitously available, as they followed the same structure.

Becoming so accustomed of this way of sorting things, people's memories started to be organized the same way:

1. General
      1. Controls

      2. Combat

      3. Secrets

2. ...

Day 06: Witch hunter, witch gatherer

When being a member of a social network became mandatory, the only way to partially escape from the all-encompassing eye was to be part of a social network with a religious exception.

Communication related to a cult were exempt from the mandatory information reporting sharing with the state.

Old and new religions increased their audience. While some   like christianity saw a small bump, its effect on witchcraft was unexpected, even among the observers that already knew of its resurgence.

Being part of a small witch internet coven first became common for privacy-aware people, then it expanded to the general population.

But a witch coven require a witch to lead it. Demand from an experienced witch exploded, even witch without specialization in cyber-rituals.

Witch fast-track certifications existed, but a self-respecting witchcraft practitioner wouldn't want to be leaded by someone with this kind of credentials.

If you wanted to create a new coven with a friend group, finding the right witch was difficult. Some recruitment companies started to move in this market, with specialized witch headhunters.

Many witches that worked in academics started to practice professionally, and covens with large funds would poach famous witches from each other.

"Indie" witches   like the anarcho-witches   kept their distances from these behaviors, and their influence slowly increased.

Day 07: Onion-based design framework

Social network massive success came from ubiquitous access, but some people wanted something more exclusive.

Managing access through concentric onion-like circles is an old idea, used by many secret societies. But the scale of social networks enabled to have a number of circles people could only dream of.

To leverage the prestige of these old mysteries, they reused the 99 degrees of the "Ancient and Primitive Rite of Memphis-Misraïm".

The first degrees only required regular log-in and participations.

- 1. Apprentice
- 2. Companion
- 3. Master

Further degrees required light reading and to connect for oddly hour chats.

- 9. Master Elect of Nine
- 10. Illustrious Elect of Fifteen
- 11. Sublime Prince Elect

Then more reading, and using some kind of avatar became almost mandatory, and people should start emitting a kind of aura that let other feel they know *things*.

- 23. Chief of the Tabernacle
- 24. Prince of the Tabernacle
- 25. Knight of the Brazen Serpent

People should still be present in the lower degrees chat rooms, being active enough so they can't be differentiated from the regular members. Skipping some of the lower-degrees mandatory tasks were allowed, as long as it was done discretely.

- 45. Sublime Sage of the Mysteries
- 46. Sublime Pastor of the Huts
- 47. Knight of the Seven Stars

Beyond some ranks, specialized interfaces and phone apps were available to keep the whole thing under control. Their task and status management UI were heavily inspired by video games.

- 87. Sublime Prince of Masonry
- 88. Grand Elect of the Sacred Curtain
- 89. Patriarch of the Mystic City

When reaching the higher degrees, a kind of ominous deep purring noise could be heard from times to times.

Day 08: Keyboards in unusual places

How to manage exclusivity in accessing social networks?

Using fame or money to select your users is good when you want to reach some kind of public, but you may want a way that make people feel like they earn the right to connect.

Exclusivity also feels stronger when it is embodied in a physical artifact instead of a password.

Thus the geocaching of keyboards.

These keyboards comes configured with an access to a single account to a single site, and can only be found through long treasure hunt-styled research.

The keyboard would then be found in a sealed bad. Finding the keyboard without knowing the site it is linked is useless.

While most people use smartphones and laptop to access their sites, having to use an external keyboard   or worse : several ones   could be seen as cumbersome.

But on the opposite, it adds one more layer to the exclusivity feeling, people proudly exhibit their keyboards, each one styled from the type of social network they were linked to: gamer, sport, books…

Day 09: Swordle

Day 10: Friendweb

Day 11: Unskippable 30-hour advertisement

Day 12: Online → oncube

Day 13: Machine yearning

Day 14: At the end of the infinite feed