



The more things change the more they stay the same?

I was looking for something in my shelves and found something else, completely unexpected, refreshing and terrifying at the same time; a book: [My Tiny Life: Crime and Passion in a Virtual World](#). Re-reading it, particularly chapter 1 (first published in the Village Voice in 1993 as [A rape in cyberspace: How an Evil Clown, a Haitian Trickster Spirit, Two Wizards, and a Cast of Dozens Turned a Database Into a Society](#), also available on the [author's website](#)) made me think a lot about the internet, cyberspace (what it was called then and what some of us still call it now), how much things have changed (for the worst) and how much things have stayed the same.

When I was an undergraduate (1994 - 98) the Internet was just starting to become a public space. Web browsers were just being released (if you knew about it, you could get Mosaic and Netscape was about to release version 1), if you spent enough time in the computer labs you'd get to play with [Gopher](#) and through it find MUDs of different flavors... from hack and slash [DikuMUD](#) and early [TinyMUD](#) servers to RPG worlds of [TinyMUSH](#), [PennMUSH](#), [TinyMuck](#) and derivatives, to social environments using MUSH, MUCK or [MOO](#) software, the most famous of which is [LambdaMOO](#).

I grew up as a player, improviser and writer in MUSH worlds of Tolkien and Battlestar Galactica so was pretty much isolated to the type of events narrated in "A rape in cyberspace", and didn't learn about them until after they happened but it was then, and still is now, hard to believe that it happened and how it happened.

To understand what happened I need to explain what a MU* (generic term for MUDs and derivatives) is and how to create characters.