



# MMORPGs

Massively Multiplayer Online Role  
Playing Games



# History and Legacy

- The pen-and-paper game Dungeons and Dragons (DnD)
- RPG Board games spun off from DnD
- Digital RPGs automate DnD mechanics and computations for you
- Text based multiple user dungeons (MUDs)
- MMORPGs enhance MUDs with graphics and a streamlined interface
  - Borrowed elements from other genres: action, strategy, simulation, construction
- Higher potential for longevity than other types of games
  - 'Online' begun in 1997, is still operating, considered a pioneer in graphic MMORPGs
  - Those who have endured for more than a decade includes Lineage (1998) and EverQuest (1999)
- MMORPGs are now known for long play sessions
  - notably WoW, peaked at 10m subscribers



11  
8

4  
3

3  
1

12  
15  
9  
18  
2

10  
6  
7  
9

4  
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16

10  
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8  
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2  
1

NAME: [ ]  
CLASS / PATH: [ ]  
LEVEL: [ ]  
SKILLS: [ ]  
DESTINY FEATURES: [ ]

CLASS / PATH DESTINY FEATURES  
SKILLS  
Open Locks BASE 10% +5% RACIAL  
+5% DEX  
Skills p 39 (PH)

ACROBATICS	INT	10	10
ARCANA	INT	10	10
ATHLETICS	DEX	10	10
BLUFF	CHA	10	10
DIPLOMACY	CHA	10	10
DISGUISE	CHA	10	10
ENDURANCE	CON	10	10
HEAL	MDI	10	10
HIT	CON	10	10
RELIGION	INT	10	10
STEALTH	DEX	10	10
STREETWISE	INT	10	10
THIEVERY	DEX	10	10



LV 12  
HP 39  
MP 38  
G 3136  
E 4057



Thou hast put the  
Knight to sleep.

The Knight is asleep.

Command?  
ValisHD attacks!

Communication Log

ready to join the academy.  
 [13 Jul 10:30:44] The receptionist says, "Greetings Mollykhan. Type 'find all' for a class directory."  
 [13 Jul 10:31:51] An Aylorian Academy Guardian exclaims, "Only the most learned may seek an audience with Arch Wizard Maerchyng. Step aside Mollykhan!"  
 [13 Jul 10:33:11] The receptionist says, "Greetings Mollykhan. Type 'find all' for a class directory."  
 [13 Jul 10:35:15] The recruiter says, "Welcome back Mollykhan! Type 'enlist' when you are ready to join the academy."

conversation about this or that rare edition float about on the air, and occasionally a voice will be raised to accuse some dishonest peddler of pushing forgeries. The Plaza Guards are more numerous here to guarantee the security of the valuable goods for sale, as well as the safety of the well-laden coin purses that dangle from the all-too-numerous belts.

[ Exits: north east south west ]

[\*Daily Blessing\*] [160/160hp 150/150mn 500/500mv 0qt 1000tnl] >  
 Among the Philosophes (G)

To the south of the Grand Plaza is a magnificent Stoa built entirely of white marble. A series of steps lead into the body proper of the building, which is encircled by peristyle ionic columns and decorated in the ionic style. The greatest minds of all Andolor congregate here to debate matters of philosophy, or just to think great thoughts in the same corridors where thinkers past have done so. The most sought-out magister of them all is Questor, who dispenses worldly knowledge and experience by giving assignments to those who ask. Those who yearn for knowledge and understanding flock to the Stoa, and they are never disappointed. Any time of day or night, conversations can be heard on subjects as lofty as the meaning of life and the nature of death and the hereafter.

[ Exits: north east south up ]

Fedora The Linux Operating System is here.  
 The world famous Master Questor of Aylor hands out quests to adventurers.

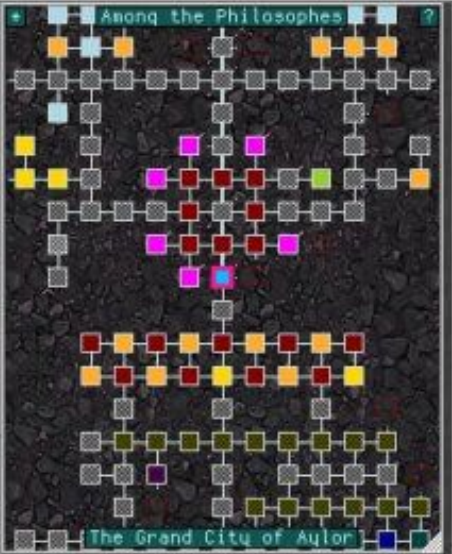
[\*Daily Blessing\*] [160/160hp 150/150mn 500/500mv 0qt 1000tnl] >

Among the Philosophes

```

?
##> (-) (-) (-)
- - (-) . > (-) - -
##> (-) (-) (-) ##>
- > [-?]
- *
(!) *$* (-) *$* (!)
*$* (-) *! (-) *$*
    
```

Strength	:	[ 13/12 ]
Intelligence	:	[ 14/14 ]
Wisdom	:	[ 11/11 ]
Dexterity	:	[ 22/16 ]
Constitution	:	[ 12/12 ]
Luck	:	[ 14/14 ]
Hitroll	:	[ 28 ]
Sanroll	:	[ 21 ]
Trains	:	[ 9 ]
Praco	:	[ 12 ]
Gold	:	[ 400 ]
Trivia	:	[ 0 ]
Quest Points	:	[ 0 ]
Level	:	[ 1 ]
Exp To Level	:	[ 1000 ]
Alignment	:	[ 0 ]
Health	:	[ 160/160 ]
Mana	:	[ 150/150 ]
Moves	:	[ 500/500 ]
Fighting	:	[ 0 ]



No Group To Display

Group info will appear here once you create or join one.

Health: [Progress Bar] Mana: [Progress Bar] Moves: [Progress Bar] TNL: [Progress Bar] Enemy: [Progress Bar] Alignment: [Progress Bar]



Gluehstrumpf Lvl:141

HP 35211 / 35211  
 MP 1200 / 1200  
 FP 1193 / 1193  
 Exp. 2.363%  
 BT 0%

05555 05555 101  
 05555 05555 99  
 05555 055  
 05555 217  
 05555 648  
 05555 659  
 05555 100

Nur Juwelen können dir Kraft geben. Komm zu mir und ich werde dir ein neues Juwel erstellen.

[Sinful] RW suchte colo team /say me  
 [Sinful] RW suchte colo team /say.me ||Verwaiter| Reach  
 [Sinful] RW suchte colo team /say me

Chat Flüstern Shout Party Glide Fix Filter SYSTEM

Start SHOP [Icons] F1 F2 F3 F4 F5 F6 F7 F8 F9 ACTION SLOT

Du kannst hier Sch den Vagrant kaufen

Shop

Item Liste

MercenaryAssist Acrobat Magician

Filter für  
 Level  
 Geschlecht

Item Preis  
 0

Miracle Gauntlet (M)  
 SEX: Männlich  
 Verteidigung: 122 ~ 124  
 Ben. Klasse: Acrobat  
 Benötigtes Level: 30  
 Preis : 10,450  
 Preis vor Steuern: 10,450

Inventar

Item \$ 694,490,228

## FULL PARTY

1	Lv80 Steven Storm	116349	10000
2	Lv80 Lohengrin Wake	116801	5600
3	Lv80 S'rako Shikhu	72864	7368
4	Lv80 Totoni Toni	74986	9768
5	Lv80 Sheena Thorn	81327	10000
6	Lv80 Aluette Eryut	81437	10000
7	Lv80 Krodos Helios	81726	10000
8	Lv80 Anarietta Van'lyn...	80179	10000

<Maka White Mage>  
Krodos Helios

Lv 80 Voidwalker

Dark Fire III

Steven Storm

Shee

Anar: Not yet ready.  
<The Syphon Strike 6574

Lohengrin Wake

Wake

<Monster Hunter>  
Totoni Toni

<Soldier of Fortune>  
Aluette Eryut

Shield Samba

Steven Storm  
<The Unsevered>

2758

Syphon Strike 600MP

Carve and Spit 600MP

## Duty Information

Eden's Gate: Descent

88:13

Defeat Voidwalker: 0/1

## Pickles of Partnership

Follow the Kojin Pickles to Confederates at the Coral Banquet: 1/2

(Totoni Toni ★) Hi  
Voidwalker: Servants of the cursed Light, this world is not yours to claim!  
(Lohengrin Wake ★) Hi  
Voidwalker: By my hand, the veil between our worlds is torn open!  
A rift has opened!  
Voidwalker: Gaze into the abyss and despair!  
A rift has opened!  
Esteem withdraws from the battlefield.  
Voidwalker: It is too late to beg for forgiveness.  
Your fate is sealed.

Party

General Battle Event



OTHERS

BET 1

145

HP 116349

MP 10000

DRK Lv80 EXP -/



# History and Legacy ‘

- Provides large-scale scenery that supports storylines based on :
  - Science fiction, Fantasy, Martial arts, other warring kingdom themes.
- Rooted in novels, films and comics
- MMORPGs is commonly known for having large multi-layered worlds
  - Spanning continents, worlds, districts, cities, streets and building
  - Portals to instanced dungeons for a party to run through at a time
- MMORPGs use Non-Player Characters (NPCs)
  - Used for quests, storytelling, and for utility for things like shopkeepers and as combat targets
  - Some NPCs serve as background characters to create impressions of vivid and complex worlds.
  - Player senses of immersion are partly due to narratives involving NPCs, maintaining the story telling legacies of past RPGs.

# History and Legacy “

- New game versions usually contain upgraded or completely new forms of game scenarios, NPCs, and objects
  - as a general rule, the longer the history of a game world, the more varied and versatile its landscape and spectacles.

# Framework and Operation

- Players have an account each:
  - May contain multiple avatars
  - Usually only one avatar may be in use at a time
- Client-server divide
  - *Player computers* execute scenarios and object movement, while other player data (*appearance and behavior*) are transmitted from a *system computer* and projected onto the *player monitors*.
  - This arrangement supports a sense of player cognition among a large number of avatars located in the same game world; the spatial cognition provides the context for MMORPG social interaction.

# Framework and Operation ‘

- MMORPG must distribute players across many servers
  - with each sharing the same game content; it is rare for a player to have the technical and physical capability to play on two or more servers at the same time.
- Often divided into regional servers
  - WoW has regional servers for United States, Europe, Russia, Taiwan-Hong Kong-Macau, China, and South Korea.
- May be divided into time zones
  - Gives a better sense of a synchronous "game-world" time, and thus better immersion

# Framework and Operation “

- Regional firms can compete for game operation licenses.
  - They handle daily operation chores involving hardware and software maintenance, content upgrades, player account management, and customer service.
- This business model is very different from that used by console game companies. This carries a higher risk.
  - One such instance is documented by *Celia Pearce* (2009) in her ethnographic study of players from *Uru: Ages Beyond Myst* after the game was shut down.
  - About 10,000 players termed themselves “*refugees*” and migrated collectively to other game worlds



# Framework and Operation “

MMORPG gaming activities entail

- character development,
- dungeon adventures,
- object manufacturing
- trade with both individual and group players

# Framework and Operation “”

- MMORPGs do not fit the standard definition of games, but are more like online theme-park playgrounds
  - players choose from a long menu of activities with different tempos and intensity levels.
- MMORPGs are continuously iterated upon with updates and patches.
- Access to MMORPG servers often includes payment.
  - time-based subscription model
  - In the 2000s, game companies adopted a free-to-play model, e.g. MapleStory (2003)
  - Players are allowed to enter online game worlds free of charge, but have to pay for functional and decorative virtual goods considered central to the gaming experience



# Framework and Operation “””

- Players wanting to make fast progress or who lack sufficient gaming time are often willing to buy virtual equipment and props with actual currency.
- Some players feel that this model compromises the integrity of online gaming.
- They argue that success should be achieved through gameplay rather than financial purchases. Disagreements include:
  - Whether players' sense of immersion is compromised when they purchase virtual goods with real money.
  - Whether their sense of fairness is challenged when rules allow richer players to buy privileges in games.
  - Whether the free-to-play model makes the game world more vulnerable to other political and economic influences.

# Gaming Activities

MMORPG gaming activities can be categorized as player versus environment (PvE) or player versus player (PvP).

- PvE players face challenges generated by the game system
  - terrains, puzzles, quests and NPCs such as quest monsters and dungeon bosses.
- PvP players engage in frequent face-to-face combat and other challenges involving other players.
- The two categories are easy to identify as dominant in a game, but they are not mutually exclusive.
  - In the PvP game Lineage, players feel a constant sense of excitement associated with ongoing survival pressure
  - PvE games like EverQuest supports a more relaxed gaming experience.

# Gaming Activities ‘

World of Warcraft (WoW) allow you to choose from servers that support both PvE and PvP versions.

- Players who choose a PvE server can still engage in PvP activities such as paired duels, but both participants must agree to do so beforehand,
  - such interactions emphasize fun rather than intense competition
- Players who choose a PvP server can still level up by completing PvE quests, but such activities must be accompanied by constant vigilance against attacks from other players.

# Gaming Activities “

PvE activities include:

- Using hack-and-slash monsters to loot equipment
- Gather game currency dropped by targets
- Participating in quests to collect functional and decorative items
- Earn experience points, and level up
- Exploring game world environments for the purposes of enjoying landscapes and background stories
- Joining dungeon teams to defeat bosses and to collect high ranking equipment and unusual pets.

# Gaming Activities “

PvE activities include:

- One-on-one duels
- Arenas for two teams composed of two to five players to exhibit their personal skills and teamwork
- Battlefields for multiple teams with perhaps dozens of players each to demonstrate large-scale strategies and improvisational tactics for ambushes or encounters
- Castle sieges involving hundreds of players who must participate in or express diplomatic alliances, logistical arrangements, loyalty, and persistence.

# Gaming Activities “”

The ongoing-world characteristic of MMORPGs is expressed in the form of

- Routine and daily economic and social activities. Avatars need
  - Food to survive or to heal
  - Tools or materials to repair damaged equipment
  - Thus, a player needs a steady in-game currency income.
- There are various ways to make in-game money:
  - Real or virtual currency can be used to purchase decorative objects such as new hairstyles or clothes.
  - complete quests that are reset on a daily basis
  - provides a basic salary guaranteed by the system.
  - visit certain areas to collect raw materials (minerals, herbs, or leather) to sell in markets
  - make various products from raw materials that they can exchange with the game system or other players in return for virtual or actual money.

# Gaming Activities “””

- Some players focus on making a large series of increasingly lucrative trades to build fortunes, either via game supported auction mechanisms or through private channels that are not sanctioned by game companies.
- MMORPG designers are known for adding structural social elements to further embed economic activity in daily life settings.
  - players may be required to establish a good reputation in a certain NPC camp before they can purchase equipment or learn recipes and instructions from that camp
  - those reputations are established by participating in daily quests.
  - This game feature encourages players to engage in routine and potentially boring activities.
- Another design features used to inject a sense of the real world is holidays and festivals.

# Gaming Activities “”””

Combined with quests that are reset on a daily basis, these activities provide incentives for players to return again and again, resulting in ongoing game worlds marked by individual tempos and displays that support evolving but stable lives among players



# Social Lives and Organization

Some MMORPG characteristics make them supportive environments for rich social interactions:

- They offer foreseeably stable and ongoing worlds that allow individual players and game communities to develop identities with evolving histories.
- The pseudonymity of one or more avatars encourages rich identity play, especially since MMORPGs provide participants with both platforms and materials for interaction
- MMORPG players do not need to meet in person to feel a sense of belonging



Pyonko™ GM Supply o:

# Social Lives and Organization ‘

- When designing their avatars, players can choose their class, profession, gender, style, and other characteristics.
  - This 'lock-in' give them a sense of uniqueness compared to other players.
- Different character classes lead to different roles in a group combat:
  - Healers, tankers, close-combat, ranged.
- You can communicate with chat, user emotes when "physically" near, perform trades and send gifts.
- Long-term player organizations such as *guilds* or *clans* serve important social functions:
  - Guilds train your live (online) negotiations abilities with other players, often strangers.

# Social Lives and Organization “

- Guilds can vary in size from less than five to several hundred members.
- Members collect and redistribute resources to make better or more efficient use of them, and share information to achieve common goals.
- They shape and maintain social norms and game world rules
- They discipline members for socially unacceptable behaviors
- They put a great deal of effort into resolving conflicts

# Social Lives and Organization “

- Players take advantage of design bugs or use plug-in programs to
  - Increase gameplay efficiency,
  - Gain an edge over others,
  - Develop innovative ways of game play.
- A practice that does not adhere to game design intentions is the use of game currency to bid on looted equipment instead of rolling the system dice to determine possession.
  - Basically black markets
- Many such practices are explicitly prohibited by game companies
  - Using client programs (bots) to play,
  - Exchanging virtual game currency for real-world cash.

# Social Lives and Organization ““

Researchers are finding that MMORPG behaviors have important implications in terms of technology user agency by highlighting the effects of system function alignment on player behavior, as well as player resistance to it.

# Gaming culture

- Gaming culture is an example of a “participatory culture.” Often seen:
  - Players mod their games
  - write fiction about NPCs or their own characters
  - come up with new strategies and novel ways of play.
  - Share movie clips of gameplay
- Taylor (2006) suggests that MMORPG culture has implications in terms of cultural innovation and economic value.
  - Game culture not only enriches gaming experiences, but also injects new ideas and methods into game worlds.
- There are many examples of player innovations being adopted by game designers and appearing in new versions.

# Gaming culture ‘

- A new phenomenon known as “labor of fun”:
  - Basically free tech-support and beta testing,
  - MMORPGs reflect an abundance of player inspiration and effort, and therefore should be viewed as both cultural and commercial products.
  - Similarly, player communities should not be dismissed as consisting of passive consumers.
  - Prosumers (*a term recently coined to describe Web 2.0 users*) are similar to players in terms of game design and production.
  - The large majority of players engage in design and game testing activity without any demand or expectation of payment.



# Players Between Two Worlds

MMORPG servers offer a large number of parallel worlds to choose from

- Factors considered by players may be
- Economic
  - Low-income players preferring free-to-play games
- Technical
  - Popular servers attracting so many players that long gameplay delays are experienced, encouraging players to migrate to new servers
- Political
  - Some governments putting severe restraints on game content force players to use servers in foreign countries instead

# Players Between Two Worlds ‘

- Social
  - Players selecting servers where online or offline friend networks already exist
- Cultural
  - Players traveling among multiple servers to explore their various game cultures before selecting one for long-term play.

In extreme cases where a company terminates operations, players who identify with the affected game may migrate collectively to another game and “live” there

- Game worlds allow for interaction among players regardless of race, age, gender, class, profession, or location

# Players Between Two Worlds “

- A huge number of MMORPG players invest large amounts of time and effort in their game world activities
  - Their devotion has resulted in real-world markets for virtual equipment and currency
    - MMORPGs is one of the few examples of economic resources flowing between two worlds and economies.
  - Game equipment and props are traded daily using player created channels.
- The free-to-play business model emerged from these market forces
  - This led to companies wanting to directly control exchanges of equipment and currency, thereby legitimizing and expanding a previously illegal activity.

# Players Between Two Worlds “

- Gold farming businesses is booming in industrializing countries
  - China, Mexico, and India.
- Players are hired to work 12-hour shifts to gain in-game items for sale to players willing to pay real money.
  - Equipment, objects, and in-game currency.
- Such practices blur traditional boundaries between leisure and work.
- Also leads to in-game inflation.
  
- Who owns the rights to virtual goods?
- How do we control money laundering?
- Should real world transaction taxes be applied to in-game trades?