

Session 11 – IDENTITY BUILDING

Reading:

Turkle, Life on the Screen (Aspects of the Self)

Concepts/Keywords

- Persona v. avatar v. player character (PC)
- addiction

Goals

- Relate to previous topics: types of players and motivations
 - Set up ground for next session – this is about how new players construct their identity vs. how developers construct identity for players
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Introduce Turkle's reading

- Psychology researcher at MIT, STS
- Creation of identity with respect to technology

Evocative objects, alone with screen

Written in 1997 (like Hamlet on the Holodeck)

Focus of chapter:

How Virtual Worlds allow us to create multiple identities, relationship between identities, using online identity as therapy.

How does technology change social relationships?

- Alone in front of screen
- Re-tribalization (Marshall McLuhan) → we reconstruct similar social structures online.

Q: How do we construct our ID in Virtual Worlds? What are our tools?

<u>Text/Non-Visual</u>	<u>Visual</u>
Name	Avatar/Icon
Language	Clothes
Behavior	Colour of skin
Gestures	Race
Guilds/Groups	

Differentiate:

- PERSONA:
 - Identity in an environment, public face distinct from essence of personality
- AVATAR:
 - Representation in a Virtual World, usually configured by player. (Second Life, Western RPGs/MMOs)
- PLAYER CHARACTER:
 - Given character to the player, cannot be changed (Japanese RPGs, Planescape Torment, Adventure Games)

We need play as part of our lives – MORATORIUM

Q: How do games favor the creation of alternate personalities? (Based on qualities of play/games)

(Based on motivations given last week)

- separate from everyday life
- *no consequences outside of it (but it can affect who we are)
- a space we can go into
- satisfaction, pleasure, relax
- social interaction, communication
- new identity, start from scratch
- being in control
- warped sense of time – time speeds up

Q: Can games be therapeutic? → yes, but with guidance or if they're designed as such

Q: Why are games addictive?

- If there's an issue, it can be perpetuated or reflected
- skinner box, pleasurable, control

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