HOW TO CHEAT AT MMOS

WITHOUT CHEATING

UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN

14TH MARCH, 20120

PROF. RICHARD A. **BARTLE**

UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX

- TODAY, I'M GOING TO TALK ABOUT **CHEATING** IN **MMORPGS**
  - MMORPG BEING AN ACRONYM SO **LONG** IT HAS ITS OWN **ABBREVIATION**, MMO...
- TO GET TO THE STAGE AT WHICH I **CAN** TALK ABOUT IT, THOUGH, I'M GOING TO HAVE TO GIVE:
  - A BLISTERINGLY SHORT **HISTORY** OF MMOS
  - AN OVERVIEW OF THE **EASY** PART OF **PLAYER TYPE** THEORY
- BOTH AFFORD ME **GREAT** OPPORTUNITY FOR **SELF-AGGRANDIZEMENT**

- SWTOR, BIOWARE, 2011

- *WORLD OF WARCRAFT, BLIZZARD, 2004:*

- # EVERQUEST, SONY ONLINE ENTERTAINMENT, 1999

- DIKUMUD, COPENHAGEN UNIVERSITY, 1990

```
[x2] A barrel has been left here.
An angry-looking statue of Hoturi is standing here.
An angry-looking statue of Priapus is standing here.
A statue of Odin is standing behind the altar.
A Sign for Newbies is here.
You are a guest here until you save yourself.

If you need
to get to your guild, use the guild medallion in your inventory. If you lose
it, pray to the statue of Odin for another.


105m/202e/38hlook
Temple of Udgaard
     You are inside the small and humble village temple in Udgaard.  A simple
stone altar, with strange stone carvings, is placed against the north wall.  A
small humble donation room is to the east.  The temple exit is south to the
Village Square.
[x2] A barrel has been left here.
An angry-looking statue of Hoturi is standing here.
An angry-looking statue of Priapus is standing here.
A statue of Odin is standing behind the altar.
A Sign for Newbies is here.

105m/202e/38h
```

- *ABERMUD, ALAN COX, 1987*

```
Your wimpy value is set to 15. See 'help change' to see what that means.

The Temple Of Paradise
    You stand in the Temple of Paradise, a huge sandstone structure whose
walls are decorated with ancient carvings and runes, some so old that even
the priests no longer know their meanings.
    A single set of steps lead south, descending the huge mound upon which the
temple is built and ending in the forests below.
A roaring fire burns here.  Its flames make the temple sparkle and glitter.
    At your feet a huge sacrificial pit allows you to give valuables to the gods
in the hope of being rewarded.
A furled umbrella lies here.

Obvious exits are:
North : Welcome Center
South : Forest Track
 Down : Forest Track

Last login: Wed Sep  7 17:43:26 2005


>
```

- ## MUD, ROY TRUBSHAW & RICHARD BARTLE, 1978

```
Narrow road between lands.
You are stood on a narrow road between The Land and whence you came.
To the north and south are the small foothills of a pair of majestic
mountains, with a large wall running round. To the west the road
continues, where in the distance you can see a thatched cottage
opposite an ancient cemetery. The way out is to the east, where a
shroud of mist covers the secret pass by which you entered The
Land. It is raining.
*w
Narrow road.
You are on a narrow east-west road with a forest to the north and
Gorse scrub to the south. It is raining. A splendid necklace lies
on the ground.
*
```

- ## MUD WASN'T BASED ON **ANYTHING**

- ## THIS IS WHY **I** GET TO GIVE THIS TALK AND YOU **DON'T**

- **SCUNTHORPE** IS A STEEL-MAKING TOWN NEAR HERE

- OBVIOUSLY, NO *MUD* PLAYER HAD EVER PLAYED ANYTHING **LIKE** *MUD* BEFORE

- **MOST** HAD NEVER EVEN PLAYED A **COMPUTER GAME** BEFORE
  - I'D **WRITTEN** MORE THAN I'D PLAYED

- FOR THE **FIRST** TWO OR THREE YEARS, IT WAS PLAYED IN THE SPIRIT OF **FACE-TO-FACE** GAMES
  - IN A WORD, "**NICELY**"

- THEN, ALONG CAME **EGOR**...

- THIS **ISN'T** EGOR, THIS IS **LOOBY LOO** OUT OF *ANDY PANDY*

- **THIS** IS EGOR, THEN AND NOW
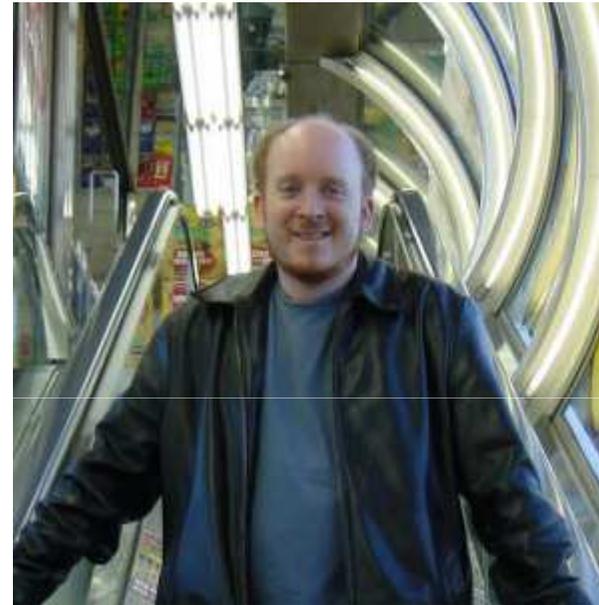
- REAL NAME **ANDREW GLAISTER**, HE WENT ON TO DESIGN DIRECTX

  – REALLY! HE WAS TECH DIRECTOR AT KINESOFT

- WHEN YOU PLAY **CHESS** IN **RL**, WHY DON'T YOU TAKE YOUR OPPONENT'S **KING** WITH YOUR **QUEEN** ON THE **FIRST** TURN?

- YOU **DON'T** BECAUSE IT'S A **GAME** WHICH ONLY **EXISTS** WHILE YOU FOLLOW THE RULES

- **COMPUTER** GAMES ARE **DIFFERENT**

- YOU DON'T DO IT IN **COMPUTER** CHESS BECAUSE THE COMPUTER **WON'T LET YOU**

- COMPUTER GAME DEFAULT: ANYTHING NOT **CODED OUT** IS BY DEFINITION **ALLOWED**

- **BEFORE** EGOR PLAYED *MUD*, MOST PLAYERS DIDN'T **DELIBERATELY** BREAK THE RULES
  - EG. GANKING NEWBIES

- EGOR **ALSO** DIDN'T DELIBERATELY BREAK THE RULES

- IT'S JUST THAT **HIS** DEFINITION OF "RULES" WAS "WHAT IS CODED IN"

- IF *MUD* **LET** YOU DO IT, HE FIGURED HE **COULD** THEREFORE LEGITIMATELY DO IT
  - BECAUSE OTHERWISE IT WOULD HAVE BEEN CODED OUT

- GAMES HAVE **THREE** TYPES OF RULES:
  - 1) ONES DETERMINED BY **PHYSICAL** LIMITS
    - I CAN'T KICK A BALL THAT'S 5 METRES FROM ME
  - 2) **WRITTEN** ONES
    - FOULS LEAD TO FREE KICKS
  - 3) **UNWRITTEN** ONES
    - "UNGENTLEMANLY CONDUCT" CATCH-ALLS
- NORMALLY, 2) AND 3) WORK BY SOCIAL **NORMS** SUSTAINING A **MAGIC CIRCLE**
- IN **MM** COMPUTER GAMES, 1) AND 2) ARE **CODED IN** AND 3) IS **NON-EXISTENT**

AGAINST RULES

- THERE ARE **MANY** THINGS YOU **CAN'T** CODE OUT THAT ARE AGAINST "THE RULES"
- THEY DON'T EVEN HAVE TO BE GAMEPLAY-RELATED
  - AOL'S **SCUNTHORPE** PROBLEM
- SOME ARE **DIFFICULT** TO POLICE
  - LOOBY-LOOING
- SOME ARE **IMPOSSIBLE** TO POLICE
  - OUT-OF-GAME COMMUNICATION
- PLAYERS IN RL **TRUST** EACH OTHER TO STICK TO THE RULES, BUT BEYOND A CRITICAL MASS..?

JUST A GAME?

- BECAUSE EGOR **BROKE** THE UNWRITTEN RULES, HE WAS CALLED A **CHEAT** BY OTHER PLAYERS
  - "SLAUGHTERING NEWBIES TO GET POINTS IS CHEATING!"
- NEVERTHELESS, EGOR **DIDN'T** HAVE AN "IT'S JUST A GAME", ANYTHING-GOES ATTITUDE
- HE **DID** FOLLOW **SOME** RULES THAT WEREN'T CODED IN, *EG.* NOT KILL-STEALING
- **ALL** PLAYERS FOLLOW UNWRITTEN RULES
  - ALTHOUGH THEY **DON'T** ALWAYS REALISE IT

- LET'S LOOK AT PLAYER TYPES:

ACTING

KILLERS   ACHIEVERS

PLAYERS   WORLD

SOCIALISERS   EXPLORERS

INTERACTING
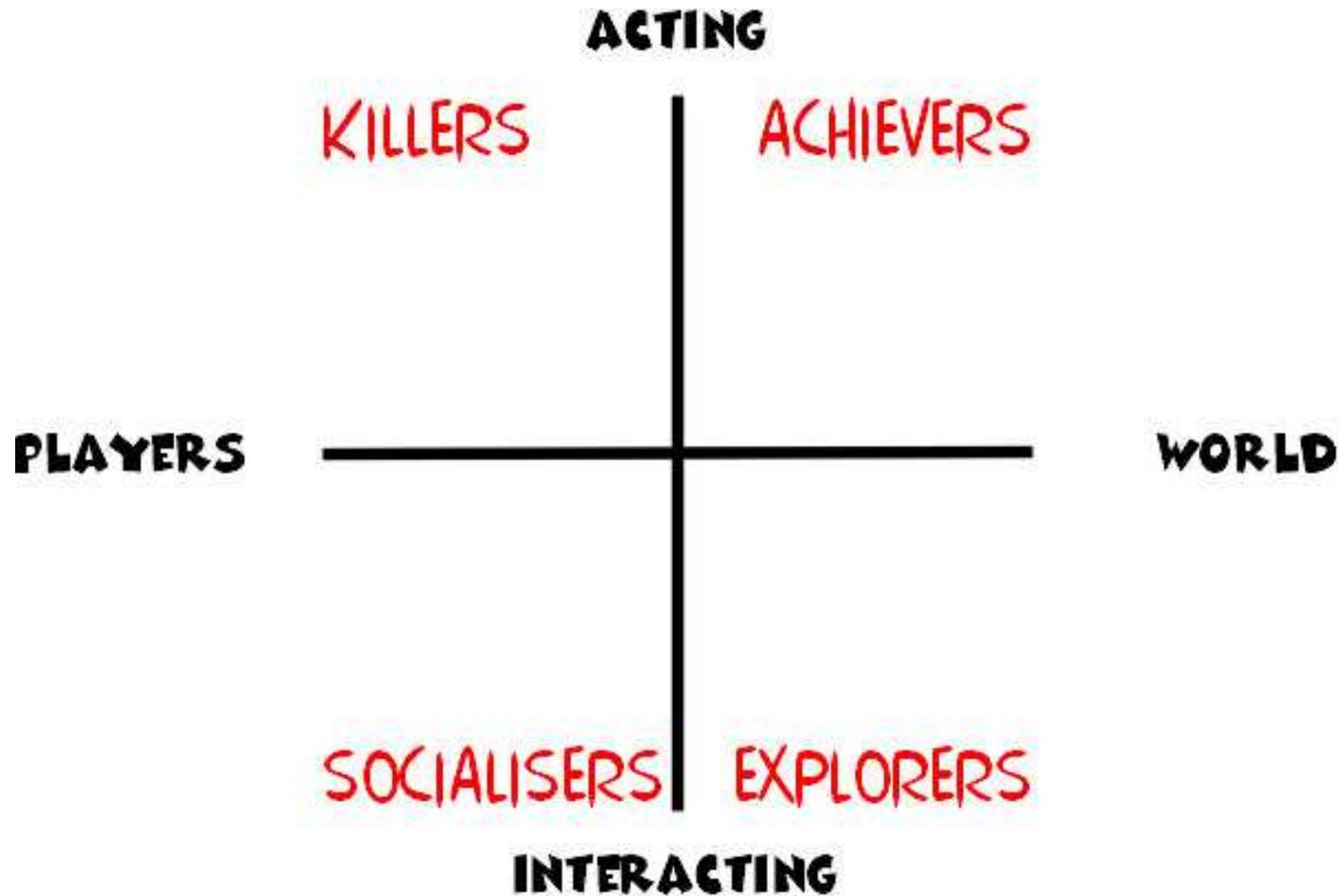
- **ACHIEVERS** TREAT THE VIRTUAL WORLD AS IF IT WERE A **GAME**
- THEY GIVE THEMSELVES GAME-ORIENTED **GOALS** AND SET OUT TO **ACHIEVE** THEM
- EXAMPLES:
  - FINDING **TREASURE**
  - KILLING **MOBILES** (MOBS)
  - GETTING **POINTS** AND GOING UP **LEVELS**
- THEY DO **NOT** LIKE THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS UNDERMINED!

- **EXPLORERS** TRY TO DISCOVER AS MUCH AS THEY CAN ABOUT THE VIRTUAL WORLD
- THEY USUALLY BEGIN WITH THE **TOPOLOGY**
  - THE **BREADTH** OF THE VIRTUAL WORLD
- THEN MOVE ON TO THE **PHYSICS**
  - THE **DEPTH** OF THE VIRTUAL WORLD
- **DON'T CARE** ABOUT THEIR **CHARACTER**
- THEY KNOW **MORE** ABOUT THE VIRTUAL WORLD THAN **ANY OTHER** PLAYER TYPE

- **SOCIALISERS** USE THE GAME AS A CONTEXT TO **INTERACT** WITH OTHER PLAYERS
  - THE VIRTUAL WORLD'S **GOINGS-ON** GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO **TALK** ABOUT
- COMMUNICATION IS **ULTRA-IMPORTANT**
  - "WORDS
  - ;PERFORMS SOME DEEDS
- **ROLE-PLAYING** OFTEN FITS IN HERE
- SOCIALISERS ARE AN OBVIOUSLY IMPORTANT COMPONENT OF **COMMUNITY**

- **TWO** SORTS
  - THOSE WHO IMPOSE THROUGH **KINDNESS**
  - THOSE WHO IMPOSE THROUGH **UNKINDNESS**
- 1ST ARE BUSYBODY, **MOTHER HEN** FIGURES
  - POLITICIANS
  - OFTEN HAVE A **SUPERIORITY COMPLEX**
- 2ND ARE **VILE DREGS** OF HUMANITY
  - GRIEFERS
  - OFTEN HAVE AN **INFERIORITY COMPLEX**

CHEATING

- PEOPLE PLAY MMOS FOR DIFFERENT **REASONS**
- **ASSOCIATED** WITH EACH OF THOSE REASONS ARE **SETS** OF **UNWRITTEN** RULES
- PLAYERS **FOLLOW** THOSE UNWRITTEN RULES
  - THAT IS, THE ONES GOVERNING THE **DIMENSION** OF PLAY THEY WISH TO **EXPERIENCE**
- THEY REGARD **BREAKING** THESE RULES AS **CHEATING**
- KEY POINT: THEY DO **NOT** REGARD BREAKING THE RULES OF **OTHER** TYPES AS CHEATING!

ACHIEVERS

- ACHIEVERS FOLLOW A **MERITOCRACY** RULE
- THEY FEEL THAT IF SOMEONE HAS **STATUS**, IT SHOULD BE BECAUSE THEY **EARNED** IT
- THEY ARE **HORRIFIED** IF PEOPLE CAN GET AN ACHIEVEMENT SOME **OTHER** WAY
  - THE *MONOPOLY* EXAMPLE
- TO THEM, IT'S LIKE BUYING A **PHD** OR A **WORLD RECORD** – IT'S **CHEATING**
- YET **OTHER** TYPES SEE **NOTHING** WRONG IN PAYING FOR AN IN-GAME ADVANTAGE

EXPLORERS

- EXPLORERS WILL **READILY** PAY TO GAIN ACCESS TO NEW CONTENT

- FOR THEM, **FIGURING OUT** CONTENT IS PARAMOUNT

- THEY WANT TO **UNDERSTAND** THE GAME MORE THAN OTHER PLAYERS DO

- THEY ARE **ANGERED** BY WEB SITES THAT "**GIVE AWAY**" SOLUTIONS

- USING THEM IS, TO AN EXPLORER, **CHEATING**

- YET OTHER PLAYERS DO IT **ALL THE TIME**

SOCIALISERS

- SOCIALISERS DON'T RATE THE **GAME** ITSELF
- THEY'LL **HAPPILY** USE OUT-OF-GAME METHODS TO ACHIEVE IN-GAME SUCCESS
  - THEY JUST WANT TO **HANG** WITH THEIR FRIENDS
- THEY VALUE **PEOPLE** AND **CONNECTIONS**
- THEY **DESPAIR** AT **LFG** MECHANISMS AND THEIR MEANINGLESS, TRANSIENT RELATIONSHIPS
- COMMUNITY-FREE GROUPING THAT **IGNORES** FRIENDSHIP AND LOYALTY IS **CHEATING**
- YET NO **OTHER** TYPES FEEL THAT WAY

KILLERS

- KILLERS GET FUN FROM **HURTING** PEOPLE WHO DIDN'T **CONSENT** TO THAT POSSIBILITY
- ANYTHING THAT **INTERFERES** WITH THIS AIM IS **CHEATING**, IN THE KILLER'S VIEW:
  - COMPLAINING ABOUT BEING ATTACKED
  - DEMANDING SOME KILLER-FAVOURITE ABILITY BE **NERFED**
  - RUNNING TO THE PROTECTION OF NPC **GUARDS**
  - CALLING IN HELP FROM **FRIENDS**
- ALL THESE ARE **FINE** IN OTHER PLAYERS' VIEWS

- NOT **ALL** CHEATING IS LIKE THIS
- SOME OF IT IS **ACCIDENTAL**
  - YOU DON'T KNOW THAT THE RULE YOU'RE BREAKING EXISTS
- SOME OF IT IS **META-GAMING**
  - YOU'RE NOT PLAYING *SW:TOR*, YOU'RE PLAYING **ONE-UPMANSHIP** WITH YOUR RL FRIENDS
- SOME OF IT IS **FRUSTRATION**
  - "THIS GAME IS TOO HARD!"
- SOME OF IT IS **BOREDOM**
  - "THIS GAME IS TOO EASY!"

FRICTION

- IN THE EXAMPLES ON THE PREVIOUS SLIDE, THE PLAYER **ACCEPTS** THAT THEY'RE CHEATING

- HOWEVER, FOR **MUCH** OF THE CHEATING THAT GOES ON THEY **DON'T** ACCEPT IT

- THEY REALLY DON'T SEE THAT IT **IS** CHEATING

- THE **REASON** FOR THIS IS THAT FOR THEM, IT **ISN'T** CHEATING

- THE ENTIRE **F2P** BUSINESS MODEL IS BASED ON **EXPLOITING** THIS **FRICTION** BETWEEN PLAYER TYPES

SUMMARY

- THE **ONLY** COMPUTER GAME RULES THAT YOU CAN **RELY** ON ARE THE ONES **CODED IN**
  - AND **MAYBE** REAL-LIFE LAWS TOO
- ALL OTHER RULES ARE **OPTIONAL**
- PEOPLE PLAY MMOS FOR DIFFERENT **REASONS**
  - THEY THINK THE MMO IS "ABOUT" DIFFERENT THINGS
- THEY RARELY BREAK THEIR **OWN** IDEA OF THE RULES BUT HAVE **NO CONCEPTION** OF OTHER PLAYERS' IDEAS OF THE RULES
- THUS, THEY CHEAT **WITHOUT CHEATING**