HOW CAN GAMES MAKE MEANINGFUL FRIENDSHIPS?

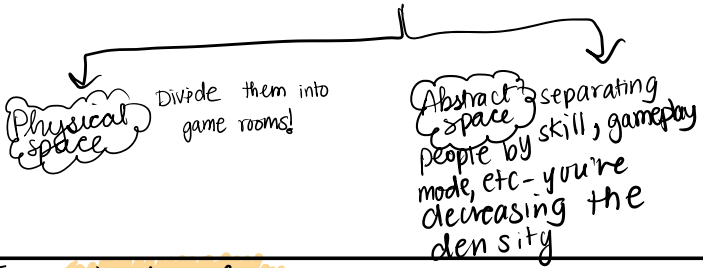building community

NO betrayal / negative emotions

research: 1950s

Laws of Friendship Formation

① proximity   ② similarity   ③ reciprocity   ④ disclosure

LOGISTICS: friendships rarely transfer to new contexts
DESIGN PROBLEM: Game designers design so as to build new friends out of strangers.

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① Proximity : social distance   ,   density

→ Physical space — Divide them into game rooms!

→ Abstract space — separating people by skill, gameplay mode, etc — you're decreasing the density

↳ by managing density you can maximise repeat interactions
GOAL ✓

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② Similarity

Design tools to benefit from similarity

. shared goals, experiences, faction   ✱✱ "shared social norms" important ✱✱   create a tribe for your players

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③ Reciprocity
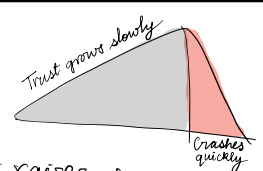
→ each interaction builds trust
↓
shared social norms

Forms of reciprocity in gaming

Chat | Friend Lists | Shared Goals | Guilds | Gifting | Trade

trust is gradual → don't start w Real names
Voice chat
Real location
etc.
(make it opt-in activity)

Friendship levels
• solitary play
– parallel play
– soft coop
– hard coop
♥ → Friends

Trust grows slowly
Crashes quickly

→ Trust raises the stakes
→ Trust is a source of civilisation