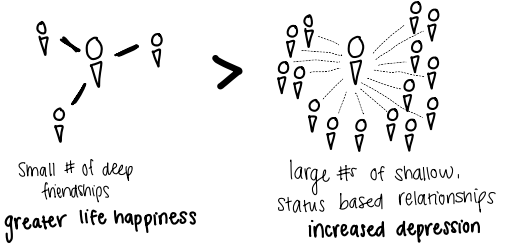


games as a tool to bring happiness to the world

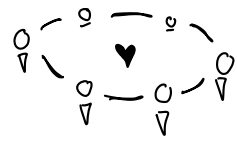
games for humanity

community, not negative emotions

Daniel Cook
not just making a game



ONLINE GAMES: FANTASY



ONLINE GAMES: REALITY

viral systems turn friendship into dehumanized market

[Follow]

restricted or unsafe chats kill deep relationships

match based systems create throw away relationships

?#!*

how can online games create meaningful friendships?

Laws of Friendship Formation

 proximity	 similarity
 reciprocity	 disclosure

games must be designed for this to happen!

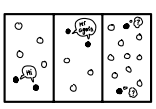
1. PROXIMITY

proximity: social distance

repeat serendipitous interactions

density dependent

logistic dependent!



Why not play w/ your friends?
concurrency: most of the time when online, none of your friends will be there

friendship rarely transfers to new contexts due to logistics

DESIGN PROBLEM: need to build up new friends out of strangers

Tools to Maximize Proximity

↑ repeated encounters

↑ density

persistent identity

density identities

IRL offline communities

more people, escape desert event

Basic Anti Patterns

anonymous players

huge, empty areas

too many modes

separating by skill

matching ... unless megahit

build these concepts narratively into the gameplay!

Pattern: Rooms

N slots in room

Join In Progress

Leave In Progress

density management, repeat encounters, low wait times

Pattern: Active Waiting Room

let people accumulate together

single player tasks

group activities

Other Patterns: Garbage Collection of Instances, Voluntary/Involuntary Migration, Preserve Cohorts (maximizes repeat interaction)

3. RECIPROCITY

make a friendly offer

give a positive response

builds trust

shared social norms, predictable behaviors that facilitate coordination

trust grows slowly, crashes fast

trust allows us to increase stakes of each interaction

deep friendships are expensive

people are wired to reciprocate

Naive Tools

chat, friend lists, shared goals, guilds, gifting, trade

Anti Patterns

- trade scamming
- lack of predictability
- extreme power differentials
- over designing for free-loaders
- high initial interaction cost

Design systems that build up friendship levels slowly

playing alone

parallel play

ambient coop

soft coop

hard coop

friends

Pattern: Automated Initial Interaction

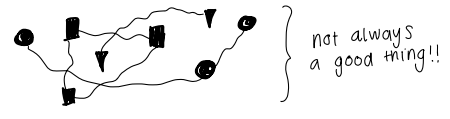
Pattern: Non-zero sum guild rewards aka: super boss vlog

Pattern: Roles → fail if you don't work together

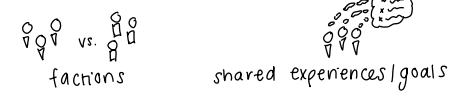
shared XP

2. SIMILARITY

people make friends w/ people like them



Design Tools to Benefit From Similarity



Pattern: Positive Fictional Identities

pro-social player roles ⇒ norms

* do not reference real world directly

4. DISCLOSURE ~ vulnerability

... risky! → but the only way to level up

playing lone

parallel play

ambient coop

soft coop

hard coop

friends

premature disclosure

kills relationship level-up

voice chat can disclose gender

opt-in disclosure

+ expressive actions

parallel play

ambient coop

+ emotes

soft coop

hard coop

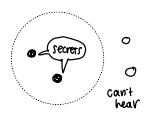
+ group chat

friends

+ private spaces

real friends must be able to skip

Pattern: Cone of Silence



Anti-Patterns

- real name
- real location
- voice chat
- item purchased w/ real \$

Design Friendship Leveling In From The Start