

Designing Games for Friendship Formation

Key Principles for **Building MEANINGFUL** connections in games



* Design games to **boost happiness** ☺

NOT just entertainment

* Online interactions are often **distorted** by **miscommunication** & **de-humanizing algorithms**

Games can **fasten these DEEP connections**

a **tool** for improving **happiness**

DEEP friendships improve **happiness**

shallow friendships can be **HARMFUL**, esp to teenagers

aka **social distance**

4 REQUIREMENTS for Forming FRIENDSHIPS in Games

disclosure

⚠ pre-mature disclosure can cause **HARM** ✓ opt-in!

* **vulnerability** is necessary to build trust...

* allow for disclosure at the **RIGHT TIME** with...

BUT IT'S RISKY!

we all have **FEAR** of rejection!

OPEN spaces to allow for vulnerability

creating **cones of silence** for private convos

Reciprocity

mutual exchanges

create **TRUST** → allows groups to accomplish more

each user **interaction** builds trust!

make friendly offers & replies

raising stakes of each interaction forms deeper bonds

grows **SLOWLY** but **CRASHES** quickly!

similarity

shared "social norms"

people are attracted to those who are like them

⊕ **Tools for fostering similarity**

⊕ **Players in Faction**

⊕ **Shared Experience**

⊕ **Shared interest/goals**

⊖ **negative effects:**

1. **Tribalism**

2. **Nationalism**

3. **Gate keeping**

PROXIMITY

* promotes **serendipitous** interactions

✓ requires **REPEAT** interactions for friendships to form

* **Basic Logical Tools** for solving **DENSITY** problems:

1. **Persistent Identity**

2. **Events**

3. **Daily Incentives**

4. **Offline communities**

* **Anti-Patterns**

⊗ **anonymous** ?

⊗ **large, empty space**

⊗ **too many gameplay modes**

⊗ **separating players**