

Beyond Games: What's Next in Virtual Worlds?

Considerations in Advance of a Metaverse

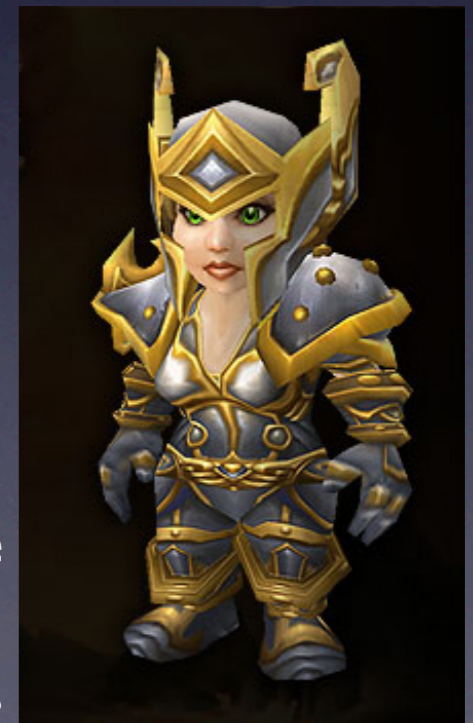


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Assumptions I

- there will be an evolution (of some kind) involving:
- the Internet
- Games
- Social Network Spaces (Flickr, YouTube, etc)
- Private & Group communications (chat, blogs, etc)



Assumptions II

- Activities beyond Games in Online Worlds
- New forms of commerce & culture
- Some will be extensions of real world activities
(mixed reality, meetings, storefronts for RW goods)
- Some purely in-world
(environment design, new media arts, biz services)

Games & Web 2.0 Convergence?

- 1 million paying WOW users, 500k Second Life
- 100+ Million ad supported MySpace users
- + flickr, YouTube, Social network sites - *time shifted*
- People want to (a) do things and (b) connect online.
- Game Developers can leverage expertise in:
- Real Time interaction (Social Network sites are time shifted) + add the social network tools

Games Into Places

- Game Design becomes PLACE / SPACE design
- Rather than designing contexts for interaction rather than the action/interaction itself
- Spaces for Culture, Commerce, & Research
- New Economies, New Work
- New Content in virtual spaces: design, art, ethics, science, finance, etc.
- How do Real World Activities change in the Virtual?

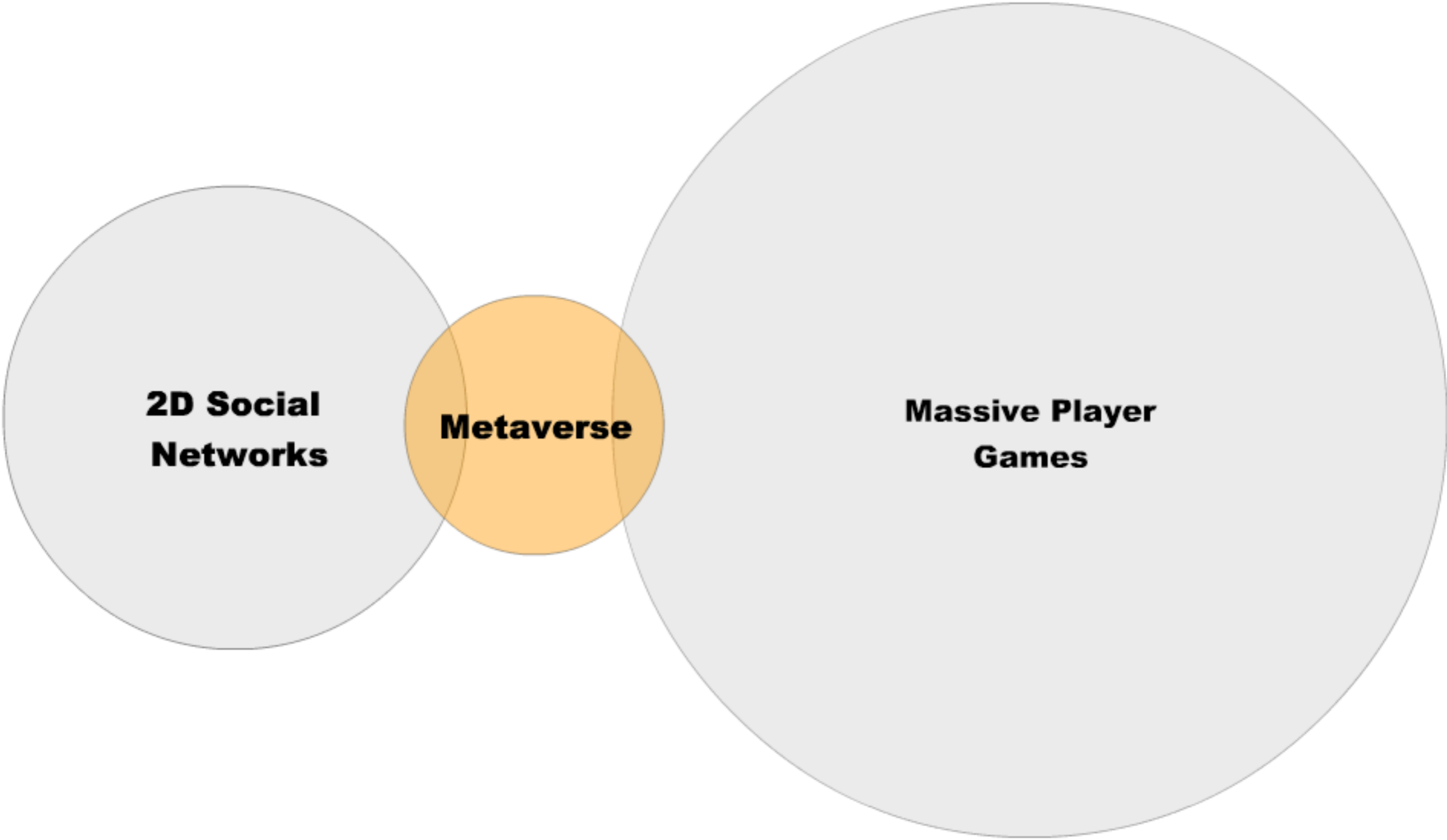
Extended Social Networks

- Physical communities in decline since 1970's
- Virtual Communities are more important than ever before
- Perception Reversal: online is “real” social space

Internet 3.0?

- Combine:
- Real Time 3D Immersion (Games)
- User generated, participatory social structures
- = 3.0 - connected shared environments
 - PLACES
- “the metaverse”

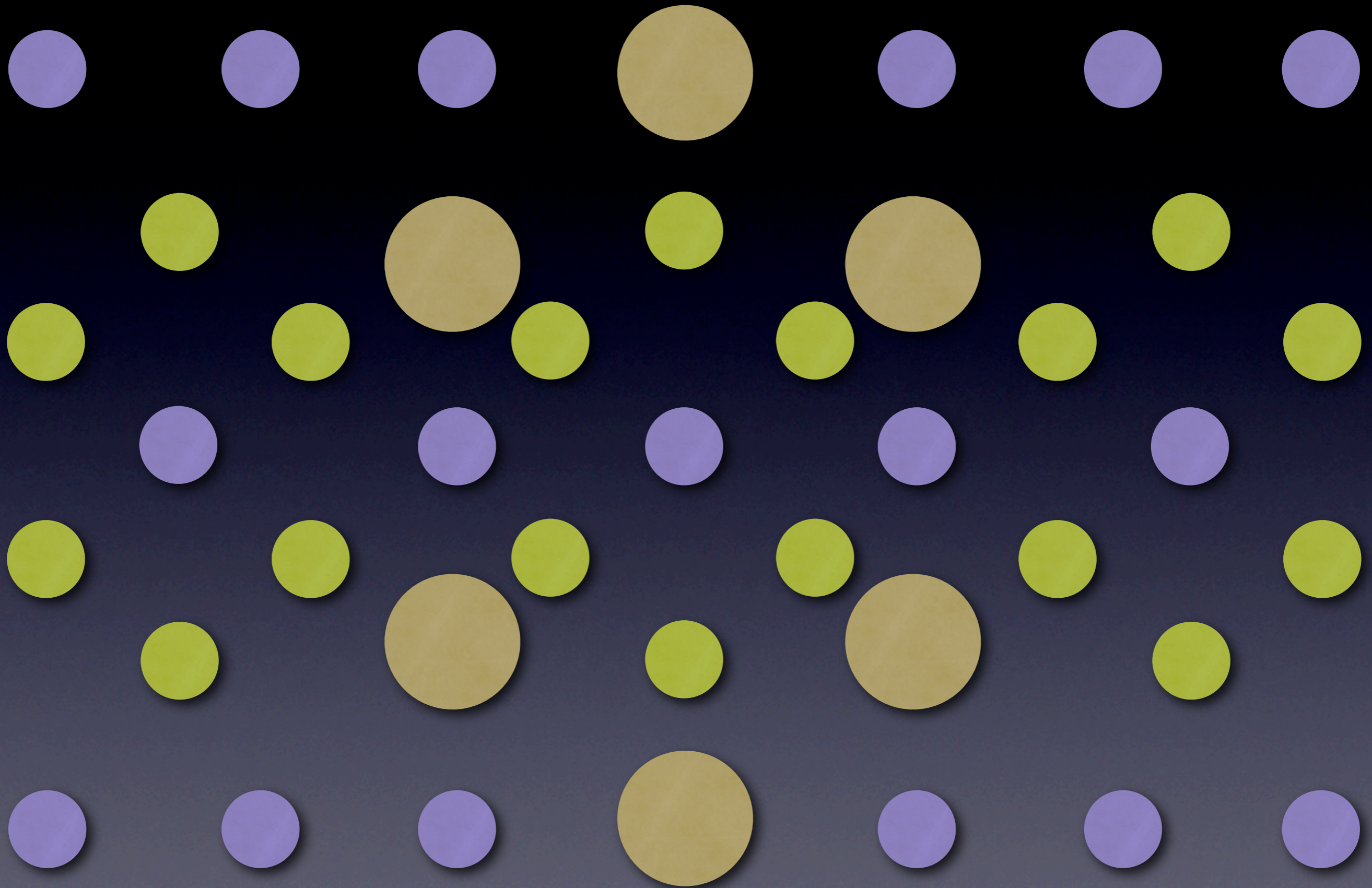




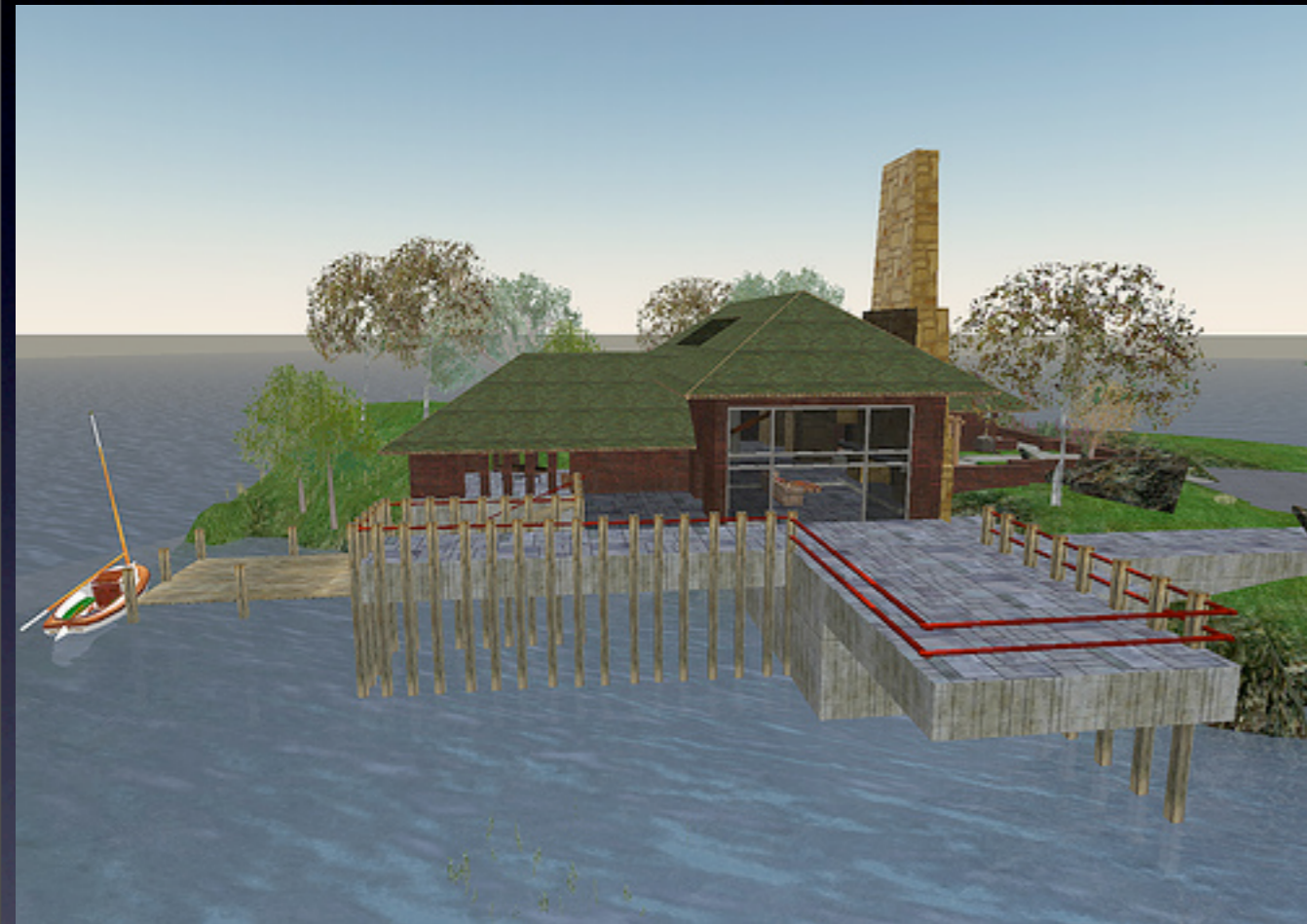
**2D Social
Networks**

Metaverse

**Massive Player
Games**

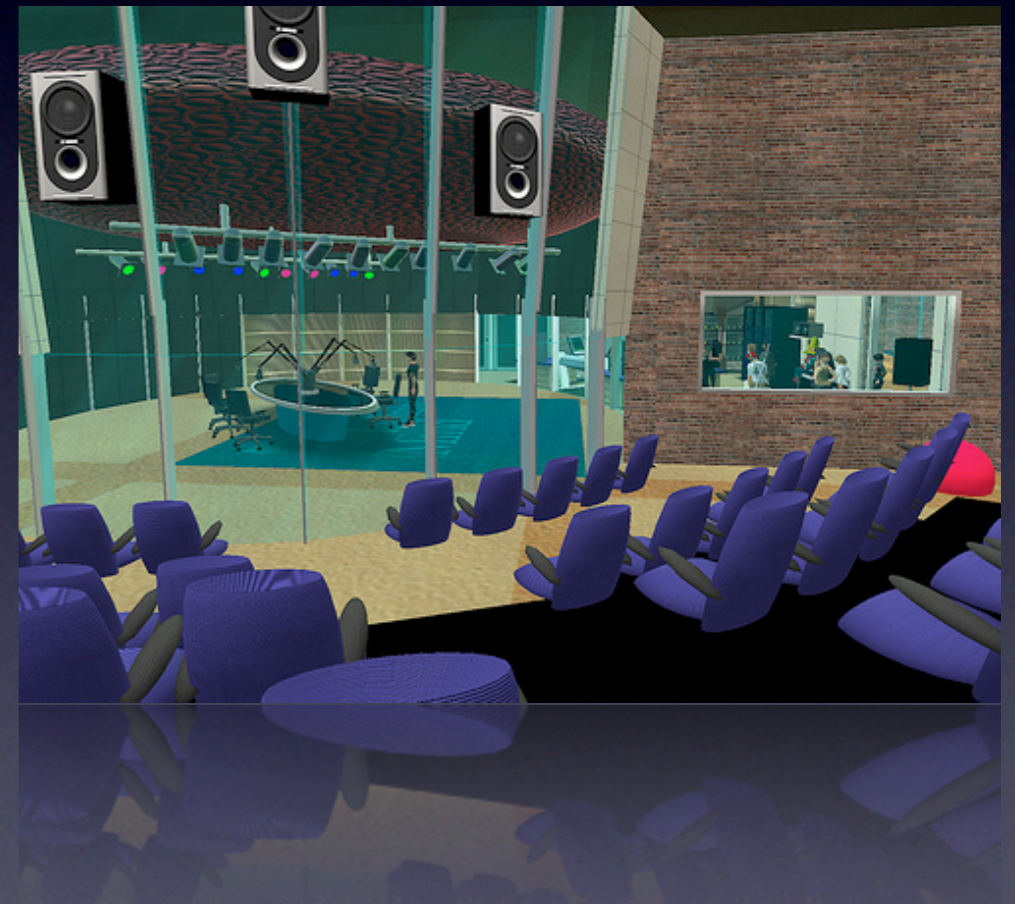


A Customizable World



Millions of Small Worlds, Connected.

- Online 'rooms'
- Businesses
- Arts, Music, Performance, Entertainment
- Education
- Research, Simulation, Medical Uses.
- And games, of course.



So Please, New Tools

- Existing tools meant for developers
- We need easier tools - an “iWorld”

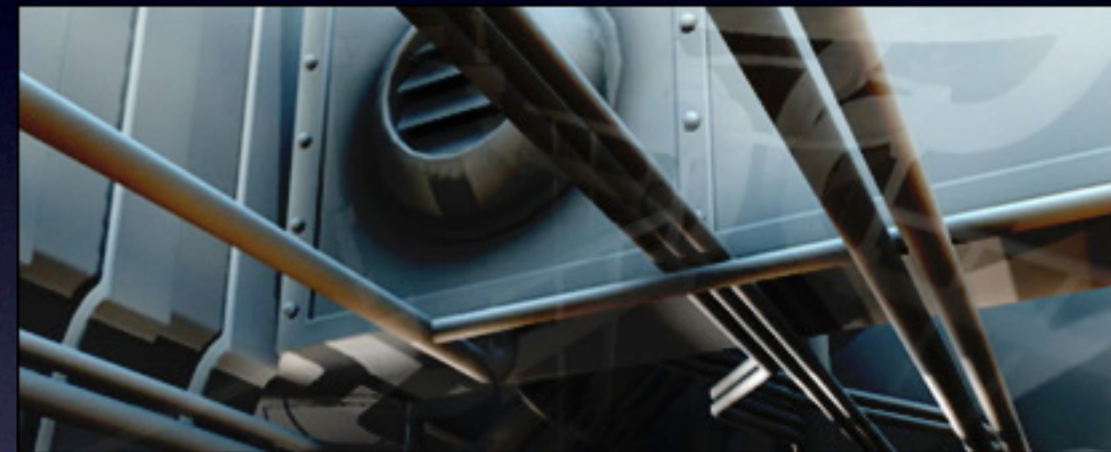


A Synthetic Landscape



UTD Worlds Lab Research Areas

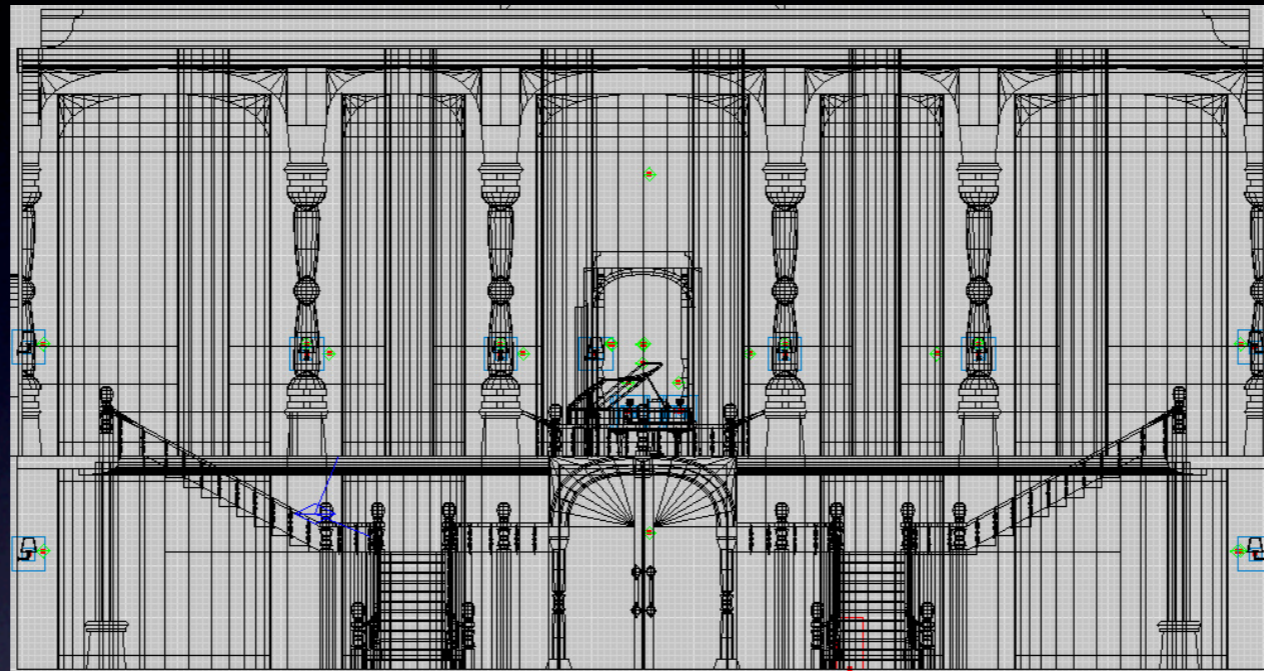
- Immersive Shared / Collaborative Environments
- Mixed Reality Events
- Education: Conferences, Lectures, Demonstrations
- Brain Health Center Therapy
- UTD ArtTech Island:
- Offices, Gallery, Performance, Studios,



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Research & Second Life



- Rapid Prototyping Environment
- Simulation of Real World Scenarios
- Iterative Process & Quick Changes to Designs
- Data Capture & Gathering for therapeutic uses

Offices



“Domestic” Environment



Architecture as UI Design

- What looks like architecture is really a UI
- Walking and flying are navigating
- Structures should be built based on world rules
- If world rules are different, shouldn't world structures work differently?

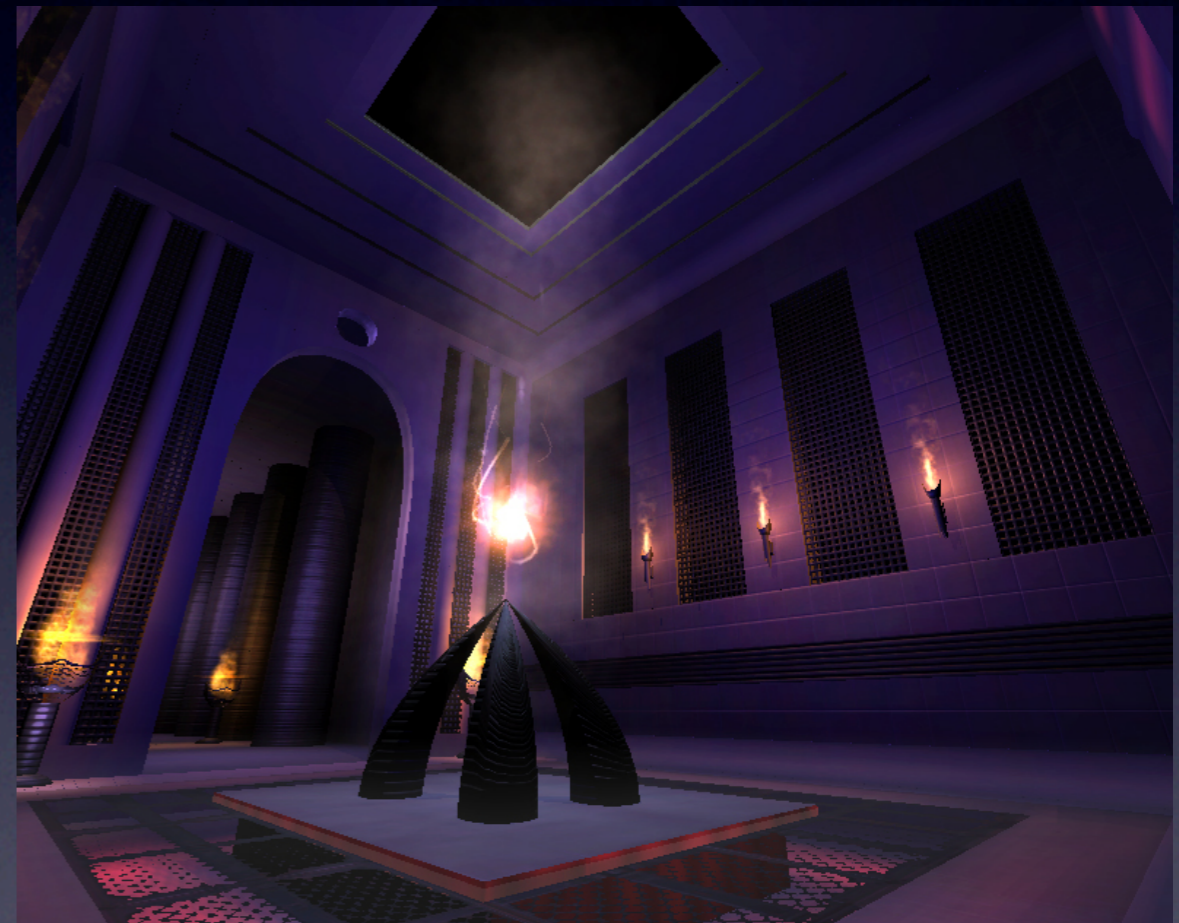


Reality Anxiety

- If no weather, why roofs? If gravity optional, why stairs? To reduce Reality Anxiety.
- Comfort vs Innovation in virtual environment design
- At first, it's all shovelware: old media into new
- Introduce slight variations at first
- Search for New Conventions

New Conventions

- New Media Evolution 101
- Look for inherent qualities in 3D worlds
- Develop new conventions
- Example: dynamic architecture that responds to users and environmental changes



The Slump



- Spaces fail as communication when you can ignore them... *and*
- When various forms of communication are not integrated



Governance

- Game Worlds are Dictatorships
- An open standard is what is needed
- Give control of the space to the users
- A public space between all the private worlds
- The in-between space will become the space itself



Dichotomies

- reality vs imagination in environment building
- individual small shared spaces vs large ones
- private spaces versus public ones
- privately owned and governed spaces vs public ones
- real avatar vs fake (re-presentation of identity or re-invention?)



Thank You



- Questions?

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