

Memento Mundi: Are Virtual Worlds history?

Henry Lowood
Stanford University Libraries
iPres 2009, 5 Oct. 2009





Earth and Beyond (Electronic Arts, 2002-2004)

Closed Worlds

- PLATO games (late 1970s), e.g. Oubliette, Avatar
 - Aradath/Dragon's Gate (Gamer's World, Genie, AOL, 1984-2007)
 - Habitat (LucasArts, 1986-1988)
 - Meridian 59 (3DO, 1995-2000) – revived 2002 by Near Death Studios, 2002
 - Phantasy Star Online, Dreamcast version (Sega, 2000-2007)
 - Motor City Online (EA, 2001-2003)
 - Earth and Beyond (EA, 2002-2004)
 - EA-Land/The Sims Online (EA, 2002-2008)
 - Tabula Rasa (2009)
 - Hellgate: London (soon)
- ... and many more

Virtual Worlds are History

- Many virtual worlds have already disappeared
- Servers shut down
- Software lost
- Data lost
- Communities dispersed



Virtual Worlds: Presence



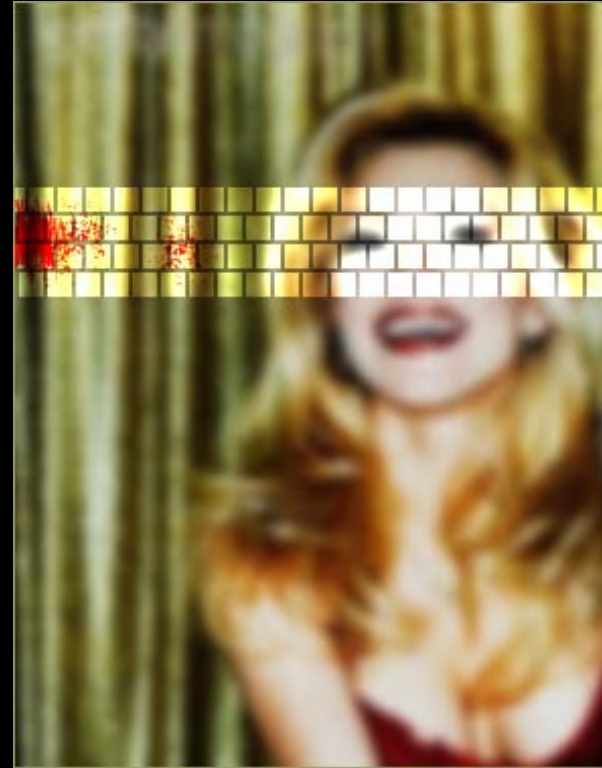
Who Killed Miss Norway?

“In March of this year, some of those friends started to notice that they hadn't seen Karyn in a while. You know how it goes in the online world--people don't leave, they just fail to show up, usually, and you never know what happened to them. But in this case there was her website to go to. So people went looking for Karyn.

A day later the news filtered out across the bulletin boards, via emails, and eventually onto the welcome message when you first logged in: Karyn was dead. She had died in a head-on collision while test-driving a new car. And it had happened two months before, in January, and none of us had known.

Her parents knew that she had friends on the Internet--they didn't quite understand what she did online, or who those friends were, but they knew that there were people out there somewhere who might want to learn the news. It took them some time to find her webpage, and to learn how to put a message up. But they did it, and they attached news items about the car crash, in Norwegian.”

-- Raph Koster, “A Story about a Tree” (May 1998)

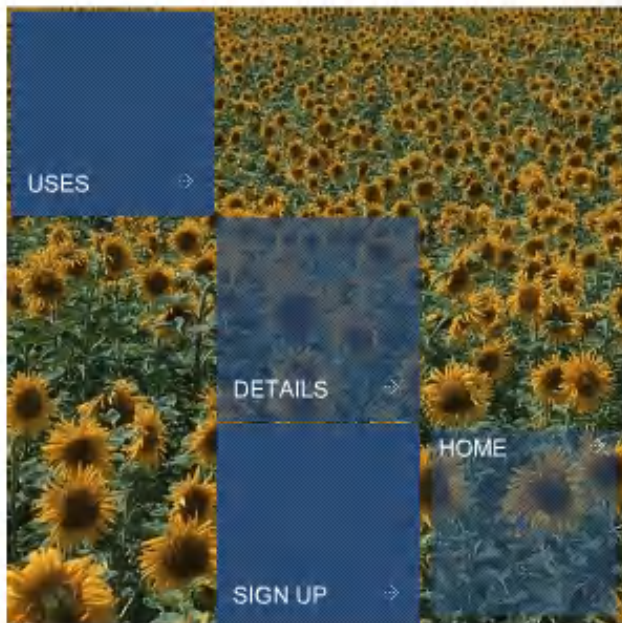


Tracy Spaight, “Who Killed Miss Norway? Salon.com (14 April 2003)

Your virtual world just closed.
What will be the first thing about it (or in it)
that you will miss?

Virtual Worlds are History

- Historically specific activities take place in virtual worlds
- Without documentation of events, communities, and activities, the history of virtual worlds is lost when worlds are lost.
- Historical documentation is a matter of archival curation, not software preservation alone.



Deathswitch.com

Information Insurance

Already a member? [Log in here.](#)

What is a deathswitch?

Imagine that you die with computer passwords in your head, leaving coworkers without access to critical files. Imagine your loved ones cannot find your bank accounts, or that you die with a secret that you longed to reveal during your lifetime. A **deathswitch** is an automated system that prompts you for your password on a regular schedule to make sure you are still alive. When you do not enter your password for some period of time, the system prompts you again several times. With no reply, the computer deduces you are dead or critically disabled, and your pre-scripted messages are automatically emailed to those named by you.

Services Overview

We are the only company to offer a deathswitch subscription service (patent pending). You create email messages, attach files, and specify your recipients, and the messages are automatically emailed after your switch is triggered. With the free account, you get 1 recipient and no attachments. With the premium account, you get 30 messages, up to 10 recipients each, and the ability to attach files such as videos, pictures and documents. We keep the information secure until you stop responding, and then we send it.

Information Insurance

A deathswitch is information insurance. Don't die with secrets that need to be free.



Perfect Capture



NoSkill Memorial Site

April 22, 1978 - Dec. 26, 2001

[chunkk] ladies and gentlemen..its as simple as this...
noskill is doomgod..and im right after him



Chris "NoSkill" Crosby and his son, Jacob *

Who was NoSkill?

NoSkill was one of the earliest, high-skilled Doom2 Deathmatch players. He was known as the original "Doomgod" and was active around 1994-1996 (demos I have span May, 1995 through April, 1996). At the time he was best known for his Doom2 Map11, Map7 and Map1 games, and reportedly liked Map3. He played modem-to-modem doom, primarily.

Why is this a "memorial" site?

NoSkill died in an unfortunate 1-car accident that occurred on December 25, 2001. He was a passenger in a car on a ramp leading from northbound I-65 to northbound I-465 around 4:50PM, in North West Indianapolis, and the car ran off the ramp. Local troopers believe that the car was going too fast for the ramp. NoSkill's name in real life was Christopher Crosby, and he was 23 at the time of his death. He was married to Nicole Crosby and had a son named Jacob.

Update: 4/23/02 : Mynx emailed with some additional information that we did not have before. It turns out that Chris was actually wearing his seatbelt at the time of the accident (we were told before that he was not). However, the driver of the car, his friend David, was not. The new information as it was emailed yesterday by his wife, Nicole Crosby, reads as follows:

- >>Chris was wearing his seatbelt. David was not. David was partially ejected
- >>and landed with his rear end on Chris's head/side, his head and chest out
- >>the back of the 2 door car.
- >>
- >>Chris died on impact basically from being shook so hard his brain couldn't
- >>handle it. David survived and didn't get completely ejected because he
- >>landed on Chris.

How do you know it was him, for sure?

How do you know it was him, for sure?

The accident was described on the website of a local newspaper, [The Indianapolis Star](#) , and a long-time acquaintance of NoSkill named [Mynx](#) has verified both his name and the description of his family as it appears in the obituary. The newspaper's sites referring to the accident and the obituary are no longer available on the website due to their age, but screenshots of the websites have been preserved locally, and can be viewed here: [accident.gif](#) and [obituary.gif](#) .

Why was NoSkill special to Doom2?

He was among the first players to develop a sophisticated Map1 game.

He was among the group of players that first developed a highly-skilled Map11 game.

He was, to our knowledge, the first player to be referred to as "Doomgod". This was originally a singular term, referring to the one highest-skilled active player. The term has changed over the years to permit multiple Doomgods.

Thorough analysis of his Doom2 recordings shows that he used an extremely uncommon keyboard and mouse configuration known as "Mouse+Keys Assist". It had no official differentiation from normal "Mouse+Keys" until recently. The difference can be summarized this way: He used the mouse primarily for movement, and the keyboard as a comparatively minor aid. This config requires extremely high mouse sensitivity to be used skillfully. Detailed technical information about Mouse+Keys Assist configurations will probably be written about soon.

Are there any NoSkill recordings around?

These are all of the recordings available on Doom2.net to date.

Players and download	Dates	Map
NoSkill vs. "Meg"	May 21, 1995	Doom2 Map11
NoSkill vs. Avatar	May 27, 1995	Doom2 Map 1
NoSkill vs. Stoney	June 3, 1995	Doom2 Map 7
NoSkill vs. EvilGenius	August 10, 1995	Doom2 Map 1
NoSkill vs. "Sil"	September 16, 1995	Doom2 Map 3
NoSkill vs. Smight	October 15, 1995	Doom2 Map 1
NoSkill vs. TrueChamp	December 29, 1995	Doom2 Map 1
NoSkill vs. Arcademan #2	March 31, 1996	Doom2 Map 1
NoSkill vs. Arcademan #3	April 3, 1996	Doom2 Map 3
NoSkill vs. Hawk	around April 4, 1996	Doom2 Map 1

A zipfile containing all of the above demos can be [downloaded here](#).

If you have material you would like to submit for use (pictures, unpublished demos, information, whatever), you are welcome to send it to bahdtko@erols.com .

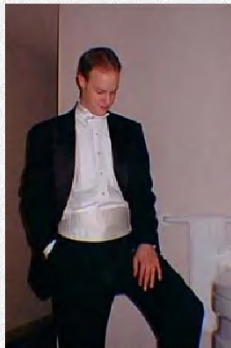
YOU GOT THE SUPER SHOTGUN!



46 AMMO	161% HEALTH	2 FRAG		164% ARMOR	 BULL 200 / 200	 SHEL 46 / 50	 ROKT 11 / 50	 CELL 300 / 300
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Christopher Jerry Crosby

April 22nd, 1978 ~ December 26, 2001



Our wedding day, February 27th, 1999



My husband adored our son Jacob. This is one of my favorite pictures.

To view Jacob's website, click [here](#)

The Story

Christopher and I were separated and he had taken our son to see his family on Christmas eve. His best friend and room-mate was just recently divorced and very depressed about not being able to spend time with his family on Christmas as they lived in Florida and he couldn't fly home. Their plans consisted of pizza, beer, and bad movies. We talked around 1pm. when he called to wish me a Merry Christmas and again around 3pm when we disagreed over a minor detail. When he called back at 3:15, I did not answer, I was asleep. Later that evening, I found out that the call went into the police at 4:50pm that they had missed the off ramp from I-65 north onto north 465 and had hit the median. Neither regained consciousness and Chris was decaled brain dead sometime that morning, December 26th. However, from

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Perfect Loss



“Now I am become death, the destroyer of worlds” –

EA-Land shuts down, 31 July 2008



Anti-Front National protests in Second Life, Jan. 2007
source: Wagner James Au, New World Notes blog

RPG Lore Network Sites:

EQ - EQ II - DAoC - MTG - AC - AC II - AO - SWG - SB - PS

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Off-Topic

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Items

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Bestiary

Geography

Magic/Spells

Player Guides

Class Guides

PoD

Zeres | 9/12/2001 2:42:11 PM

Here we gathered around another of Norrath's famous citizens, also joining us in raising a torch.



[Add Comments] Please add your comments here! [Add Screenshot] Submit your own screenshot!

Order by Date: [Asc] [Desc] Order by Rating: [Asc] [Desc] Currently: Descending by Date

Submitted by: **Skincade the Malevol** On: 9/15/2001 9:46:27 AM

Rank: worst 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 best

Great thing you guys have going. I lead my guild, being the guild leader =P, on a walk from Freeport, through EC, into Nek, Lava, all through Najena, then back and to Sol B. The guild is made up of all lvl 56+ characters except one 53 and one person's 49 alt. MANY were suprised that a bunch of high lvl players would be doing this instead of "camping phat l33tz", but we were all very hurt by this incident, as we lost a friend that was touring the WTC. My condolences and hats off to you all for your good deeds. Oh and to the "smart one" below, someone gave the PoD the torch, no gm took him over.....

Skincade The Malevolent
Grave Lord of the 60th Harvest
-Leader of- ~Immortal Brood of Tarew Marr~
Tarew Marr Server

Everquest, 12 Sept. 2001, reported on Everlore forum (defunct)

Vigil held on Tunare in Memory

Zeres Thex [9/13/2001-11:04:44 AM] **Comments**[5]

Last Tuesday, after the days horrific events, there was a vigil held in the Greater Faydarks on the Tuanre Server.

About 20-30 of us as well as 4 guide layed down our arms and lifted torches in memory of thos lost. We then had a moment of silence in their honor (there was actually a full minute in GFay with no shouts or ooc's, and only 2 auctions).

We then marched from the Felwithe Gates where we met to the bank of Kelethin. There, we held a toast with the fine spirits provided by the guides. After the ceremony, we all gave our torches to merchants and other NPS's in kelethin, so the memory of those lost may live on.

If you are on the Tunare server, log on and you will still see them holding there torches high in honor of those who lost their lives.

Screenshot #1

Screenshot #2

Screenshot #3

Screenshot #4

Screenshot #5

Screenshot #6

Screenshot #7

Screenshot #8

Everlore forum, 12 Sept. 2001

I think the one thing that *isn't* in the proprietary data is the history of unusual or defining episodes or events in the life of particular virtual worlds . . . The narrative history, the event history, of any given virtual world, may in fact be obscured by the kinds of god's-eye view data that developers have. After all, they often don't know what is happening at the subjective level of experience within communities, or have to react to it after it's happened. (Say, when players stage a protest.)

- Timothy Burke, "The History of Virtual Worlds," Terranova blog post and discussion thread.



front of the shard please PICTURE TIME... WILL POST IT ON THE BOARDS"
ng cooking inept on it ok"
y up there"
nw"
aken: thanks

Asheron's Call, Thistledown server, Nov. 2000 –
Protecting the Shard of the Herald (above)
Shard Vigil Memorial (right)



Events



Everquest: The killing of The Sleeper (15 Nov. 2003) -- screenshot taken by members of participating guilds



Strange Company, "Ozymandias" (2001)



World of Warcraft – what’s happening here? When? Why?
Answer: Serenity Now attacks Fayejin’s funeral procession (4 March 2006)
Source: Archiving Virtual Worlds Collection



Anybody home?

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Game Art, Game History, Game Shows by HTGG

9 September, 2009 - 14:35 — [Matteo Bittanti](#)

What have we been working on in the past few weeks? Here's a brief update:

Henry Lowood: ***The Complex History of Pong*** (PDF), a chapter of a special issue of *IEEE Annals in the History of Computing* co-edited by Lowood.

Matteo Bittanti: Experiments in Game Art: **c'était un rendez-vous numerique** (2009), **ObamAds** (2009) and **james ballard plays burnout** (2009).

Nicholas Wener: "**All Your History Are Belong To Us**", a new game show that examines the history of specific game franchises, in this case, *Halo*.

Stay tuned for more!

[Matteo Bittanti's blog](#) [Add new comment](#)

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posted:

01:49 PM 09/19/2009

New post on Avalon Hill Computer Games up at: <http://bit.ly/jjAxnc>
Enjoy!

posted:

12:40 PM 06/30/2009

Wood like to know what this keyboard is for

<http://mobypicture.com/75c0q64>

The Stephen M. Gabrinety Collection in the History of Microcomputing

VIDEOGAMES



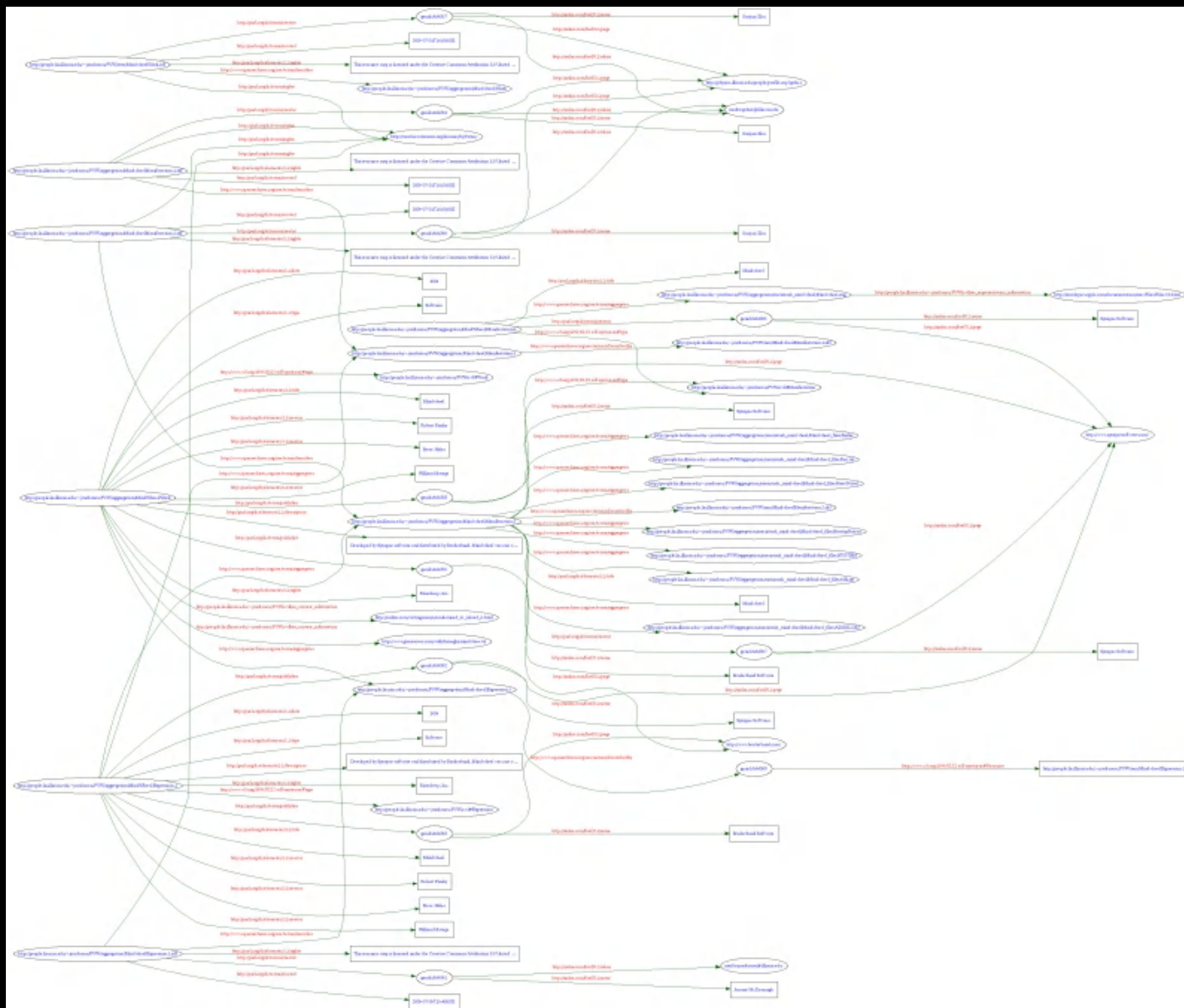
Preserving Virtual Worlds

Project Goals

Develop mechanisms and methods to preserve digital games and interactive fiction by

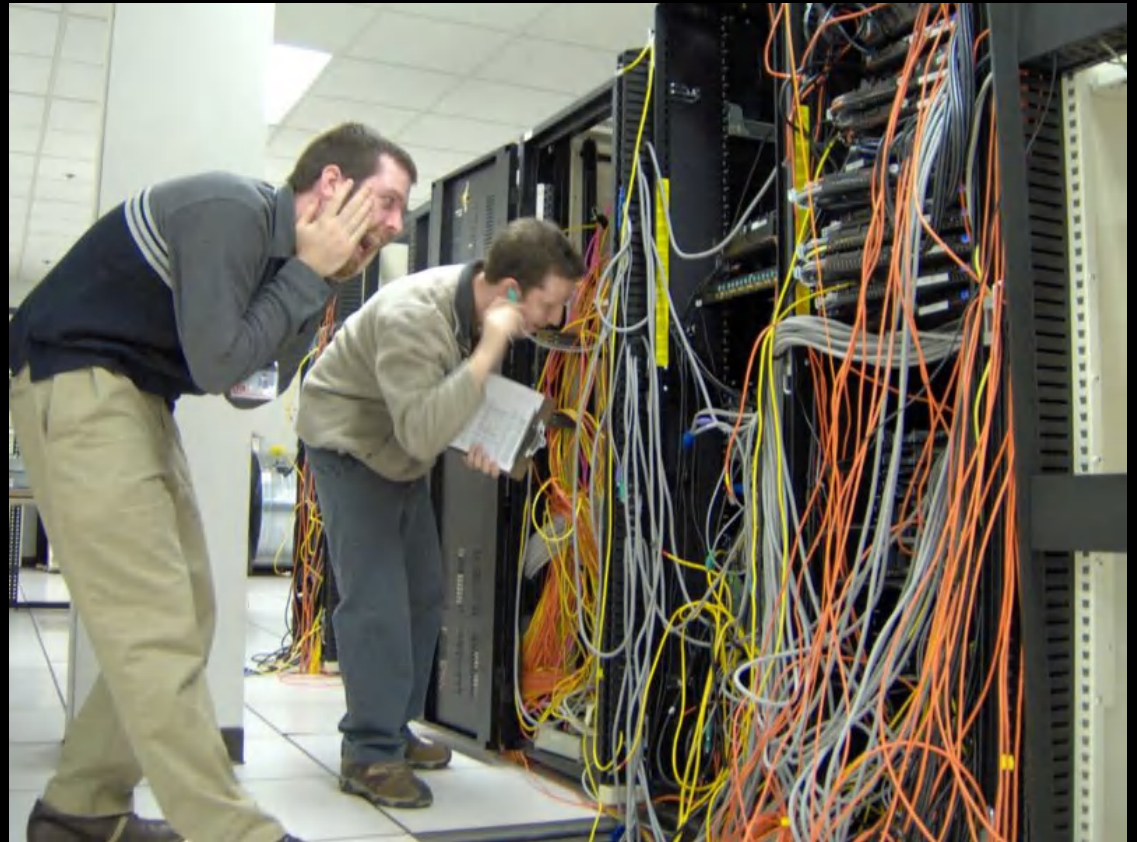
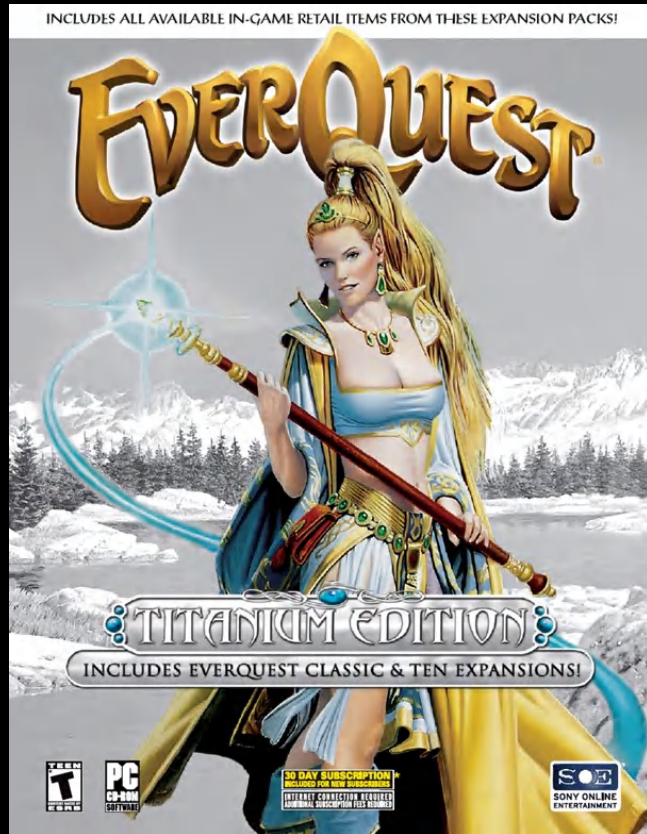
- Investigating preservation issues through a series of case studies;
- Developing basic standards for metadata and content representation;
- Archiving key representative content; and
- Building community awareness of issues.





Mindwheel, RDF metadata, by Jerome McDonough, PVW project

What are we preserving?





Tristan Pope, “Not Just Another Love Story” (2005)

How we got game ...





Pals for Life, “Leeroy Jenkins” (2005)



DOOM, id Software, 1993


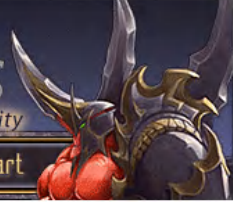


Speedrun demo from the Quake done Quick project, 1996-

[R2]ARCHY: IS THAT WHO I THINK IT IS?



The Rangers, “Diary of a Camper” (1996)
The first machinima project: a Quake demo movie

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 - [Member Chat](http://www.wcreplays.com/forums/forumdisplay.php?f=2) (<http://www.wcreplays.com/forums/forumdisplay.php?f=2>)
 - [Game 2 of WCG Final](http://www.wcreplays.com/forums/showthread.php?t=24285) (<http://www.wcreplays.com/forums/showthread.php?t=24285>)

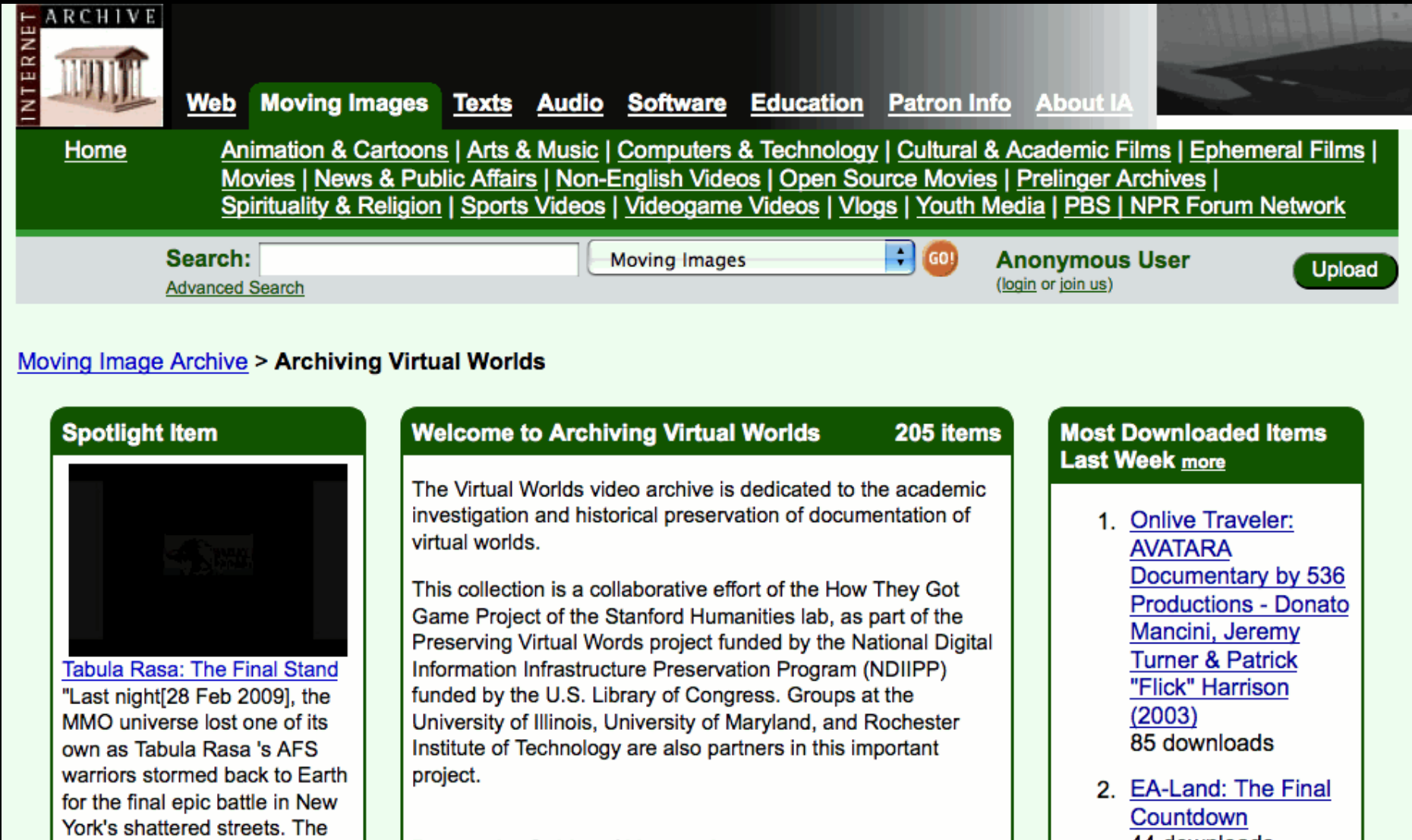
whakojacko	10-10-2004 05:46 PM
Game 2 of WCG Final	
<p>Was anyone there to see it? I was, it it was simply amazing. Grubby killed zacad's fs when he tped at low hp by using ls on the firelord, the 20 dmg/sec killed the gs. Just insane. The whole crowd was silent it was so funny, noone had figured out that grubby's ls on the firelord right before he tped has killed him. It was a great game. Game 3 was also good, but not as good as 2. Gj grubby</p>	
d1ck0fDnkyKong	10-10-2004 07:16 PM
<p>yo where can i watch the grubby v rex matchup</p>	
0)Z	10-10-2004 08:07 PM
<p>this site...</p>	
Deathapult	10-10-2004 08:37 PM
<p>man i saw that in person, and everyone in the stands just went insane.</p>	
xxprzn-angelqtx	10-10-2004 08:40 PM
<p>what i dont understand is the LS kill didnt give him experiance? i didnt know that ls kills didnt give exp :(</p>	
renrut	10-10-2004 08:43 PM
<p>No, since it's out of view/in fog of war area, you don't get exp, BUFF plz...</p>	

WCRplays.com, Oct. 2004



Grubby vs. Zacard (WelcomeTo), World Cyber Games, 2004
Screenshot from replay run in game engine

Archiving Virtual Worlds



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Spotlight Item



[Tabula Rasa: The Final Stand](#)
"Last night[28 Feb 2009], the MMO universe lost one of its own as Tabula Rasa's AFS warriors stormed back to Earth for the final epic battle in New York's shattered streets. The

Welcome to Archiving Virtual Worlds 205 items

The Virtual Worlds video archive is dedicated to the academic investigation and historical preservation of documentation of virtual worlds.

This collection is a collaborative effort of the How They Got Game Project of the Stanford Humanities lab, as part of the Preserving Virtual Words project funded by the National Digital Information Infrastructure Preservation Program (NDIIPP) funded by the U.S. Library of Congress. Groups at the University of Illinois, University of Maryland, and Rochester Institute of Technology are also partners in this important project.

Most Downloaded Items Last Week [more](#)

1. [Onlive Traveler: AVATARA Documentary by 536 Productions - Donato Mancini, Jeremy Turner & Patrick "Flick" Harrison \(2003\)](#)
85 downloads
2. [EA-Land: The Final Countdown](#)
44 downloads



Habitat, 1986

"Lucasfilm's Habitat -- it's a wonderful new place that's simply out of this world. Coming to life only on QuantumLink."



Stanford Humanities Lab - Web Archive
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Welcome to Archive-It

Current Subscription (started on 01-Jan)

Documents Crawled:	3,190,932
Subscription Document Budget:	5,500,000
Budget Used:	58.02%
Data Archived:	143.92 GB
Maximum Seed Count:	200
Total Active Seeds:	68

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All Subscription Periods

Documents Crawled:	7,721,072
Data Archived:	362.54 GB

Getting Started
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Active Collections	Last Completed Crawl	Next Scheduled Crawl
Digital Games	September 23, 2009 1:16:14 PM PDT	November 8, 2009 11:01:08 AM PST
Virtual Worlds and MMOS	August 13, 2009 1:50:03 PM PDT	November 7, 2009 12:42:43 PM PST

This home view gives you an overview of your account activity including subscription start date and budget.

To create a new collection, click the "create new collection" link from the "collections" drop down menu at the top of the screen.

To manage existing collections, select a collection from the "collections" drop down menu at the top of the screen. You can also get to your active collections by using the links under "active collections" at the bottom of the screen. Information about current or upcoming crawls is available under the "crawls" link at the top of the screen.


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If you need assistance, email an Archive-It partner specialist at archive-itsupport@archive.org.

Archive-It collections: Digital Games & Virtual Worlds & MMOs

Metadata editor for [EALand_FinalCountdown](#)

Bold fields below are required.

You may also visit the [Item Manager](#) 

Field Name	Description	Value
identifier:	The identifier of the movie	<input type="text" value="EALand_FinalCountdown"/>
title:	The title of the movie	<input type="text" value="EA-Land: The Final Countdown"/>
creator:	Producer	<input type="text" value="How They Got Game Project, Stanford University"/>
mediatype:	Indicates to the website that this item is a movie.	<input type="text" value="movies"/>
collection:	Indicates to the website what collection this item belongs to. Must be a valid identifier.	<input type="text" value="virtual_worlds"/>
description:		<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px;"><p>These are the last few minutes of EA-Land at the See You Soon Party in EA Town Hall, hosted by EA's Parizad. Tears are shed, final goodbyes are made, and lasting memories are created before the plug is pulled and the world is brought to an end. The party was held in the Community Pub (Test Center 3) and EA Town Hall (EA-Land), beginning Thursday, July 31st, 11 p.m and with a scheduled ending of 4 a.m. PDT. The game world was officially shut down as of 4:35am PST, August 1st, 2008. If you have a fast connection, I recommend downloading the high quality DivX version on the left.</p><p>The EA-Land Blog has been taken down, but more information about the event can</p></div>
date:	Year of this movie (YYYY)	<input type="text" value="2008"/>
subject:	Keyword(s) or phrase(s) that may be searched for to find your item. Separate each keyword or phrase with a semicolon (";") character.	<input type="text" value="EA-Land; The Sims Online; Archiving Virtual Worlds"/>



language:		<input type="text" value="English"/>
coverage:	The extent or scope of the content of the resource (geographic place, temporal period, jurisdiction). For example, the place the work took place.	<input type="text" value="EA Town Hall, EA-Land"/>

Archiving Virtual Worlds, metadata editor

A Use Case

Science (AAAS)
9-11 May 2008

cf. John Bohannon, "Slaying
Monsters for Science."
Science 320 (20 June 2008):
1592.

[Bohannon's reportage](#)



Participants gather in the sewers of Undercity for session 2 of the first scientific conference in Azeroth. Two of characters of the conference organizer, Bill Bainbridge (NSF) are visible: Computabull (foreground) and Catullus (lip of the drainage pipe mounted on an ostrich).
CREDIT: Henry Lowood

What about access?



Office hours in the digital archives

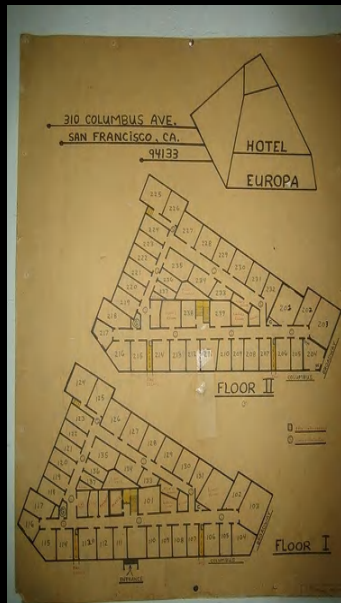


Library in a box? Nice, but not the Ultimate Archive



Stanford University Libraries
Second Life Open House,
31 July 2009

An Animated Archive: Life-Squared



Documentation > Archives > Experiences
(engagement)



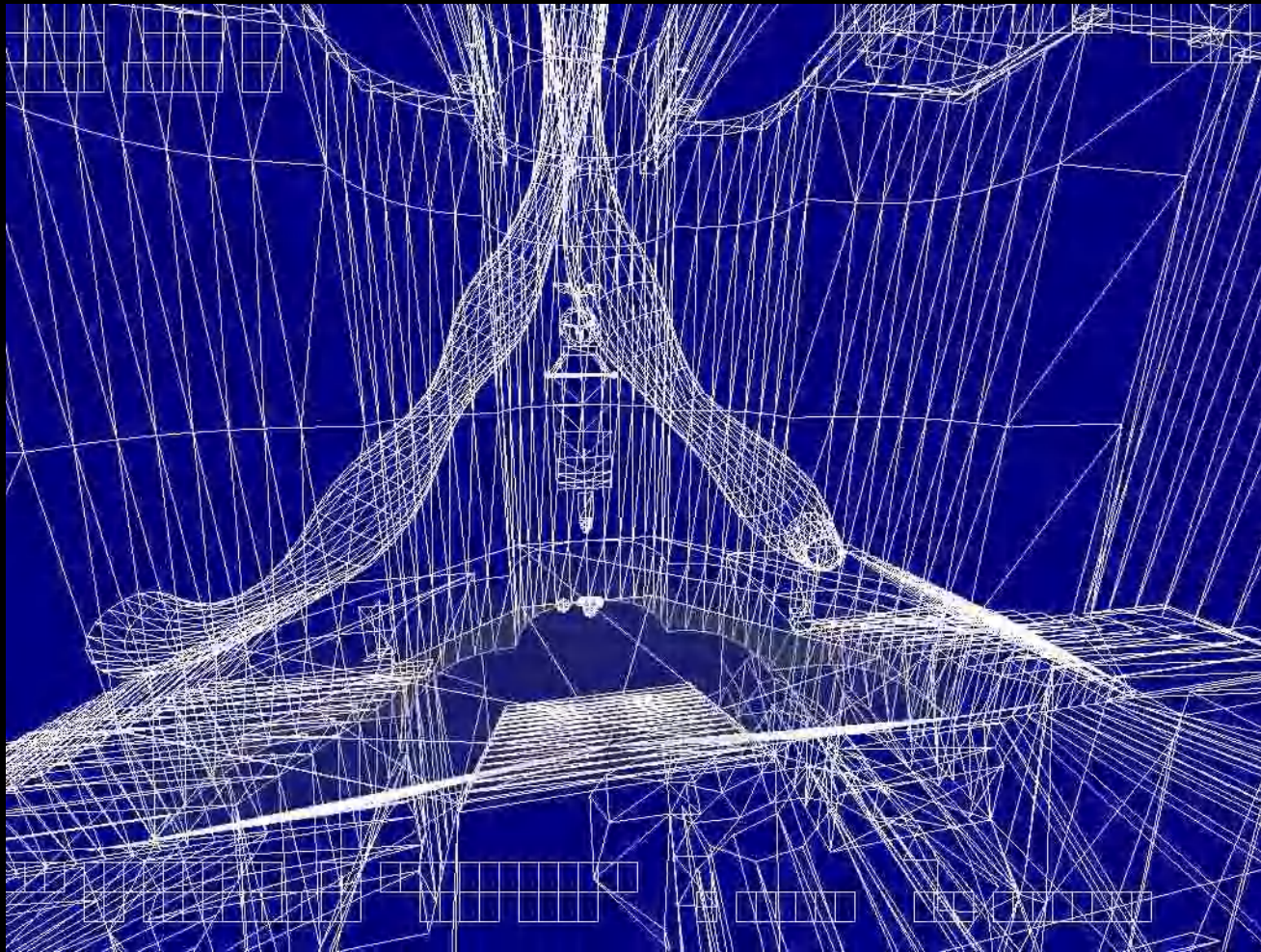
“Dinosaurs in Their Time,” Carnegie Museum
of Natural History, Pittsburgh



Sirikata



Quake 3, q3dm4 (Diesel Engine: OpenGL Quake 3 Arena map viewer)



Quake 3, q3dm4 in wireframe view



Museum of Natural History, New York



Quake 2 Model Bump-Map Viewer (Intel, 2000)

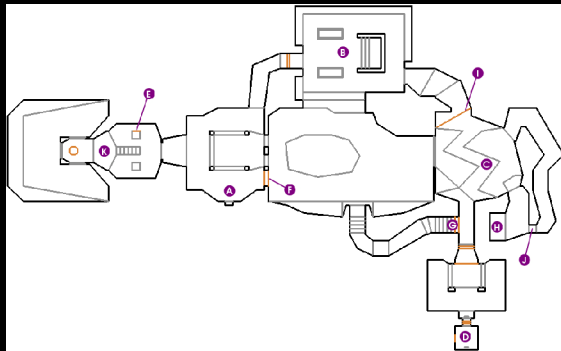
SDR – Collection Interface

Back to Summary

SDR Admin Database Prototype

Last commit: 03/2009 11:02:37 PM
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 Total objects: 1,659,5
 Total number of files: 10,852

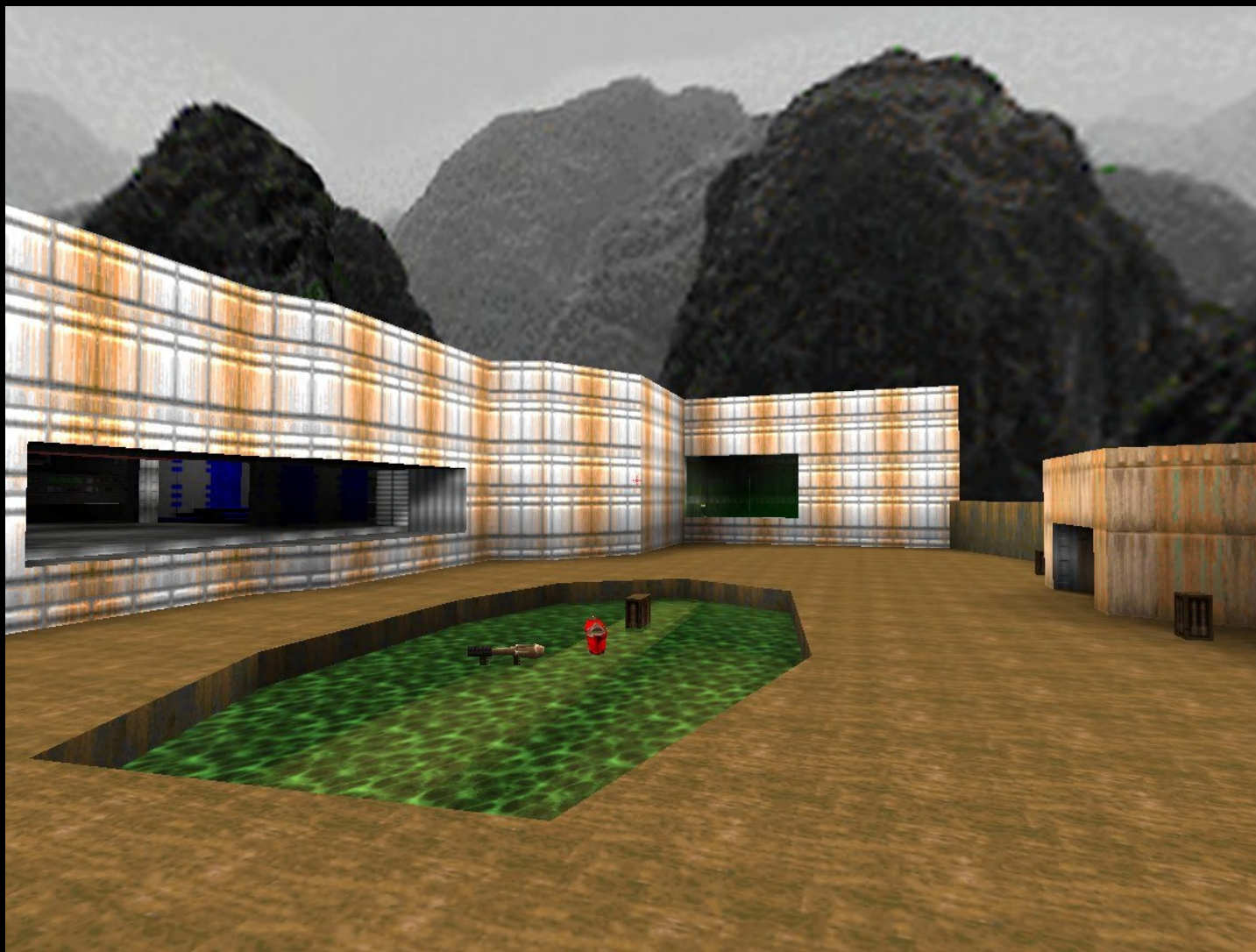
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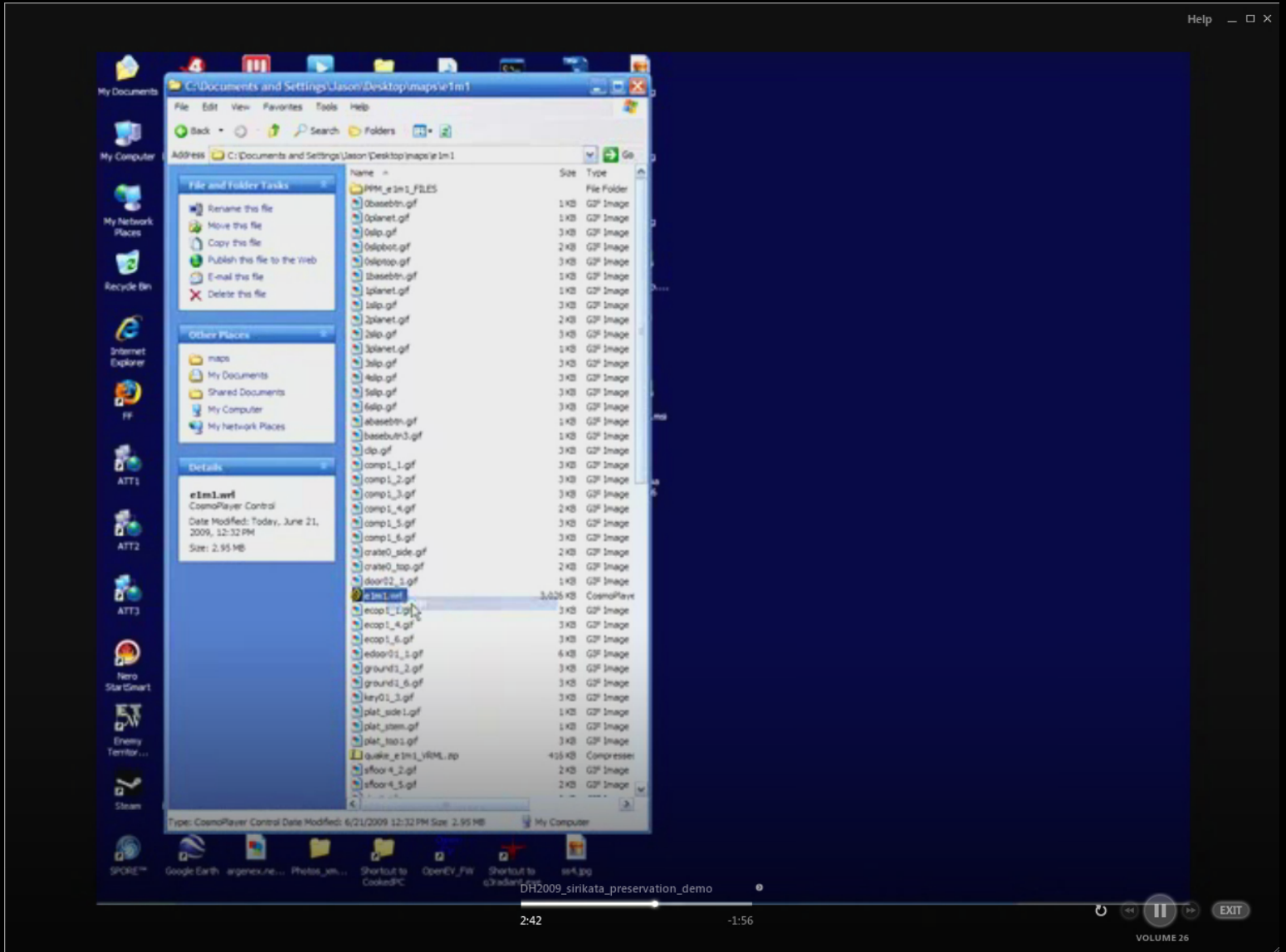
E1M1 2-d map from
DOOM Wiki

Ian Albert, DOOM
E1M1 (“Hangar”)
rendering from WAD
file, 3-d projection
(Java program)





DOOM E1M1, Hangar, in Quake

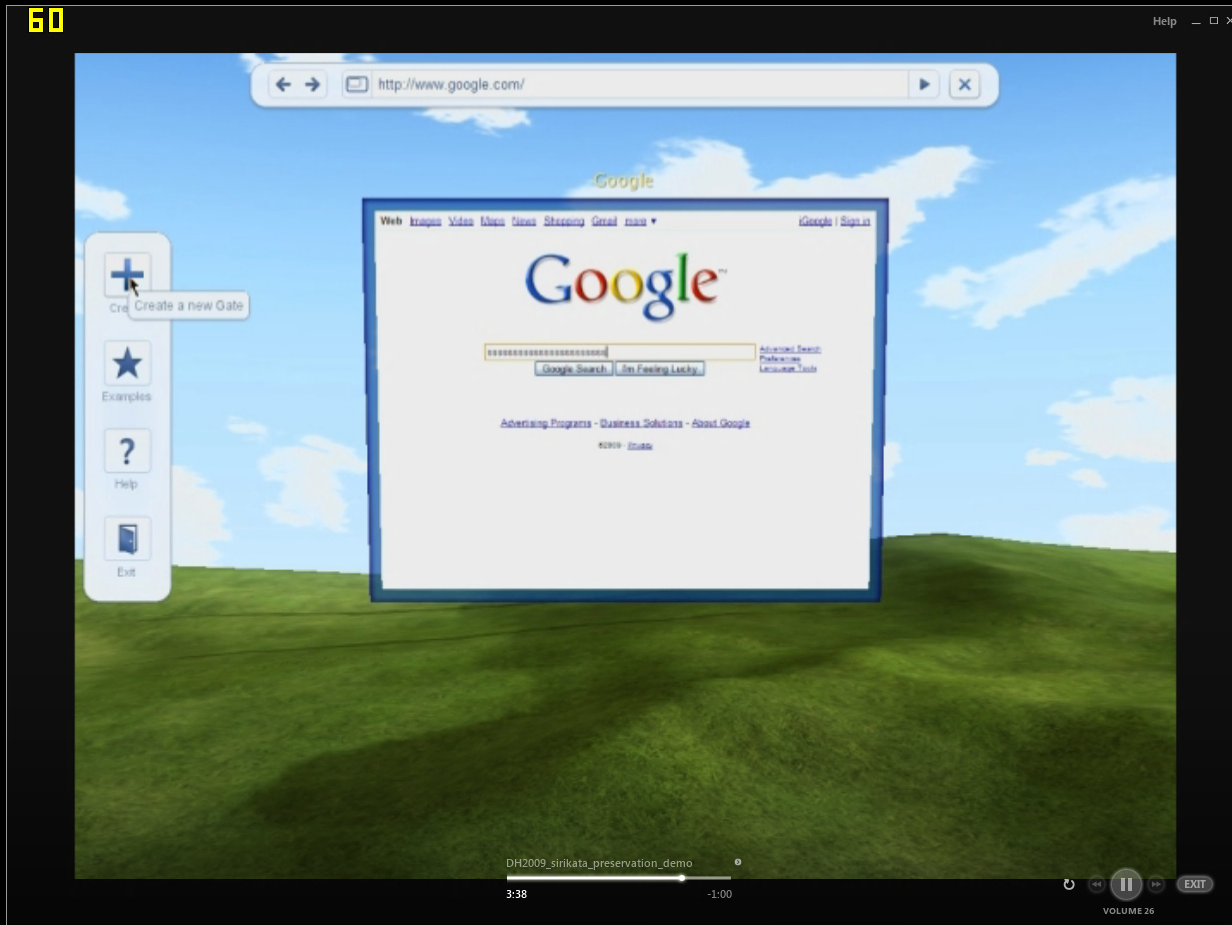




As if that weren't enough ...



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UC Davis
KeckCAVES

"Quake 3 Arena
Level Renderer"

Cave Quake III Arena, UC Davis



Group performance in Lord of the Rings Online (2008)



Henry Lowood, lowood@stanford.edu