

TAKE CARE

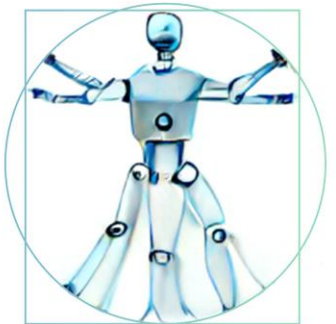
In this lecture I briefly discuss sexual harassment and violence in the LambdaMOO virtual world.

Have you been the target of sexual harassment and/or violence or other unwanted behaviour?

Leiden University has an information page, where you can find out how to get support: tinyurl.com/leiden-support

Digital Media, Society, and Culture

Angus A.A. Mol
Walter Crist III



L U C D H

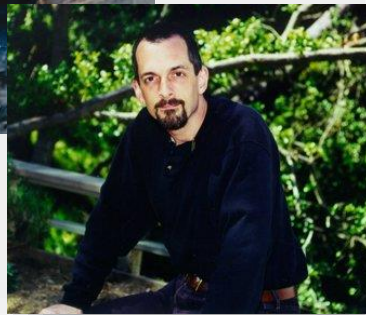
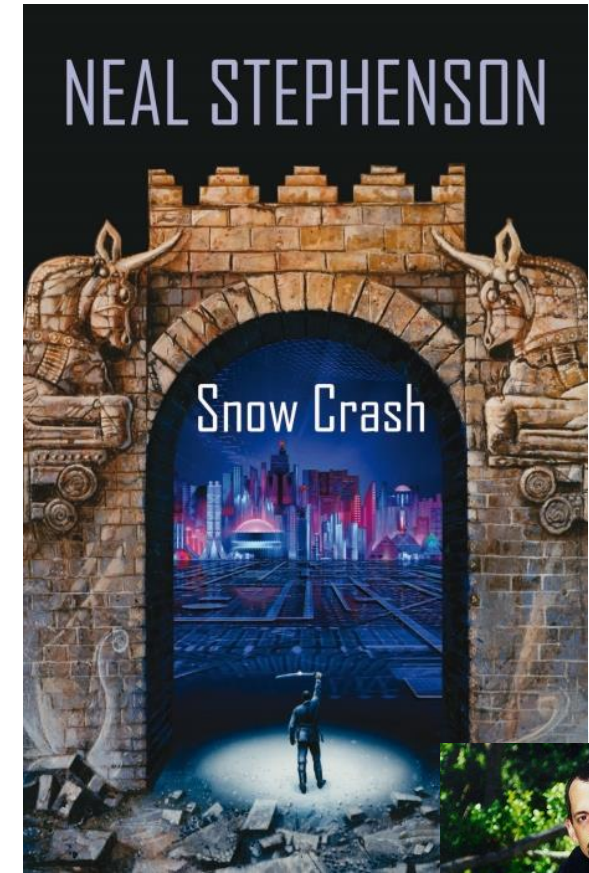
The Metaverse



Snow Crash (Neal Stephenson, 1992)

“#Hiro Protagonist and Vitaly Chernobyl, roommates, are chilling out in their home, a spacious 20-by-30 in a U-Stor-It in Inglewood, California. But there are worse places to live.

But Hiro's not actually here at all. He's in a computer-generated universe that his computer is drawing onto his goggles and pumping into his earphones. In the lingo, this imaginary place is known as the Metaverse. Hiro spends a lot of time in the Metaverse. It beats the shit out of the U-Stor-It.”



This Information is so Meta!

- Metaverse is meta + (uni)verse
- From Greek *μετά* ('by means of; between; in pursuit or quest of; after, next after; beyond')
- The Metaverse
 - is transcending
 - is self-referential
 - is a reality technology
 - Was, is or will be the next big thing
 - is purple (at least according to artist's renditions)
 - Is the technological/cultural evolution of 'virtual world'



Virtual (adj)

- “in essence, potentiality, or effect, although not in form or actuality” ([OED](#))
- Virtual is “that which isn’t, having the form or effect of that which is.” (Bartle 2004)
- A metaphysical question
 - Reality+ (Chalmers)



Virtual Worlds

- “Where the imaginary meets the real” (Bartle 2004)
- Virtual Worlds:
 - Have *physics*: underlying automated rules that enable players to effect changes to it.
 - Have players that represent individuals or *characters* in the world
 - Interaction takes place in *real time*
 - are *shared*
 - are (at least to some degree) *persistent*.



```
Telnet british-legends.com
Initialised.

Multi-User Dungeon - MUD1 Version 3E(19)

      You are invited to check out Section 9,
      our discussion forum for MUD players.

      Please direct your browser to:
      http://www.british-legends.com/Forums/S9.htm

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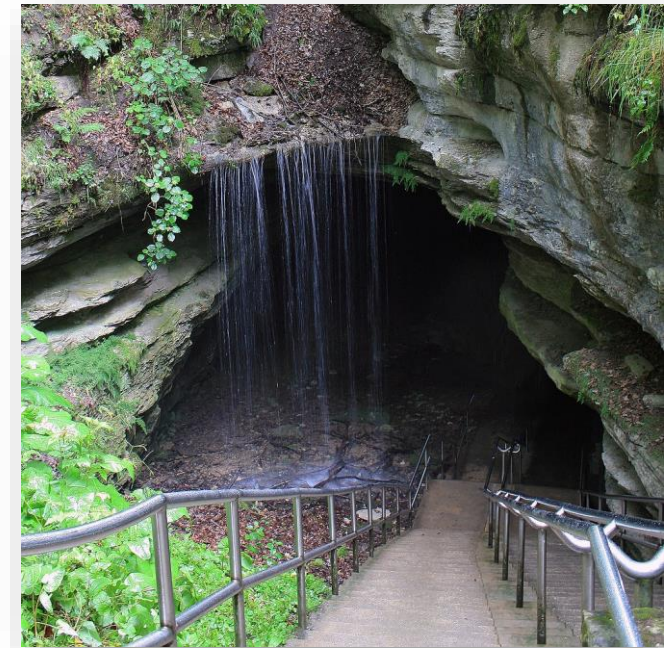
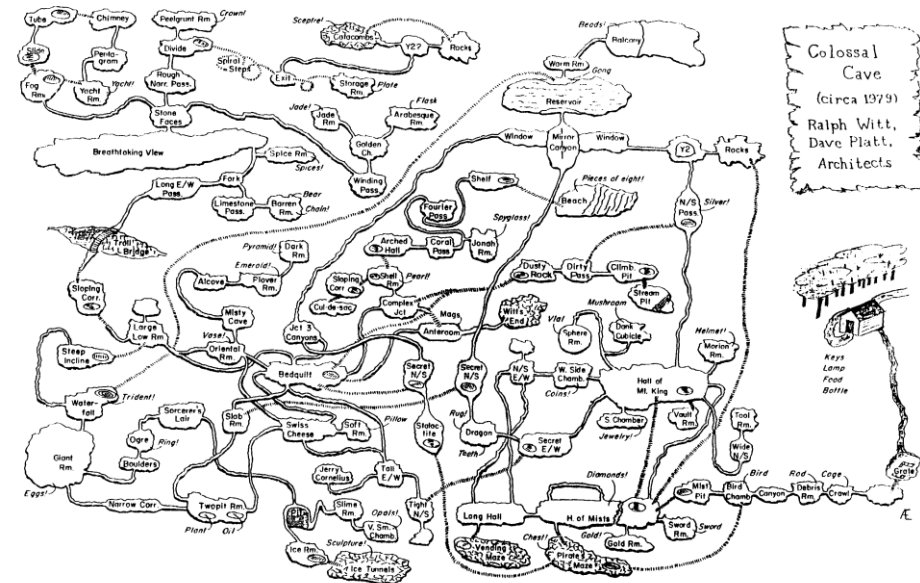
*****
* MUD2.COM is where you'll find the next generation *
* version of MUD1/British Legends. Another creation *
*   of Richard Bartle, MUD2 offers many extras,   *
*   including smart mobiles, new areas, and more.  *
*   Best of all, it's free. Why not try it today?  *
*****

Origin of version: Fri Jan 19 22:26:12 2018

Welcome! By what name shall I call you?
*
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MUD (Multi-User Dungeon)

- Multi-User
 - Multiplayer, i.e. via a network
 - University networks
 - Early Dial-up networks
 - Access to MUDs based on provider (MUD belonged to CompuServe)
 - Once responsible for up to 10% of internet traffic (1993)
- Dungeon
 - [Zork](#), originally called Dungeon (MIT 1977-1979) ← [Colossal Cave Adventure](#) (Will Crowther, 1976), also known as ADVENT ← Dungeons and Dragons + Caving



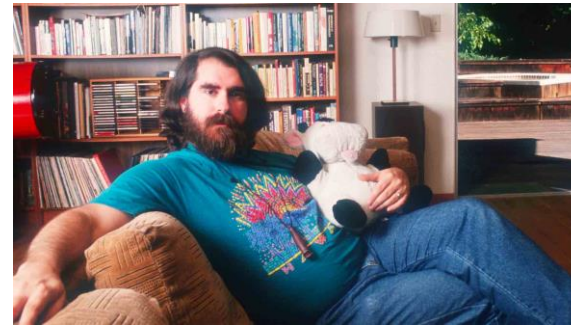
Mammoth Cave (Kentucky)

TAKE 
CARE



LambdaMOO

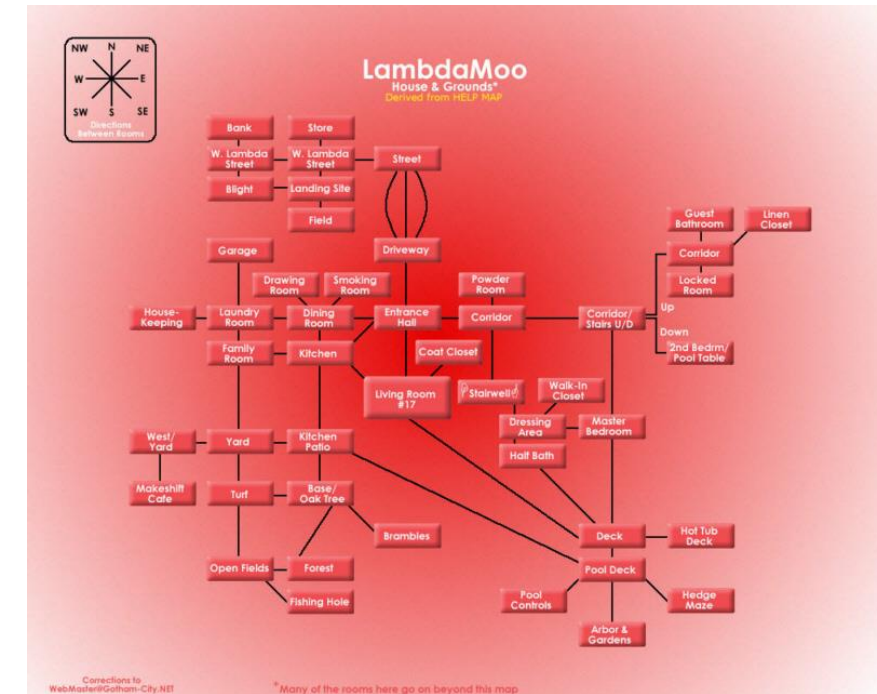
- MUD, Object Oriented
 - Players can create objects through scripting
- LambdaMOO
 - Hosted in Xerox Parc
 - Made by Pavel Curtis, further developed by thousands of people after him.
- Longest running virtual world
- Social Experiment
 - No hierarchy
 - “Wizards”
 - Large community
- *A Rape in Cyberspace* (1993)
 - Using a virtual voodoo doll
 - Led to institution of code of ethics and democratic self-governance system.



Pavel Curtis



Xerox PARC (Palo Alto, CA)



Map of LambdaMOO

Graphical Virtual Worlds

- *Mazewar*
- *Ultima Online* (1997)
 - Set in the world of the Ultima games by Richard Garriott
 - Famous for having a carefully designed ecosystem that was completely destroyed by players.
- *Second Life* (Linden Labs; 2003)
 - Social and entrepreneurial hub
 - Virtual Economy (GDP) in 2006: \$64 million
 - If actual economy would have ranked 55 out of 179 countries.

→MMORPGS, most famously WoW



Mazewar on an IMLAC-PDS 1D (1973)



The Coming Archaeology of Virtual Worlds

(see, e.g. [Aycok 2021](#))



A reconstructed archaeological site in Second Life that is now gone.



The E.T. "Worst Game Ever" Landfill



Presence

Avatars

Home space

Teleporting

Interoperability

Privacy and safety

Virtual goods

Natural interfaces

The Forever Dream of VR

- VR has been around for a long time
- 2016: “Year of VR”
 - Oculus Consumer-version VR
 - Oculus owned by Facebook
- Pandemic: no breakthrough
- 2022: Meta’s metaverse underwhelms
- 2023: Sylvius Labs and Leiden’s own VR cave opens!



3D movies in the
Sensorama (1962)



A virtual reality suit
(1989; VPL Research)



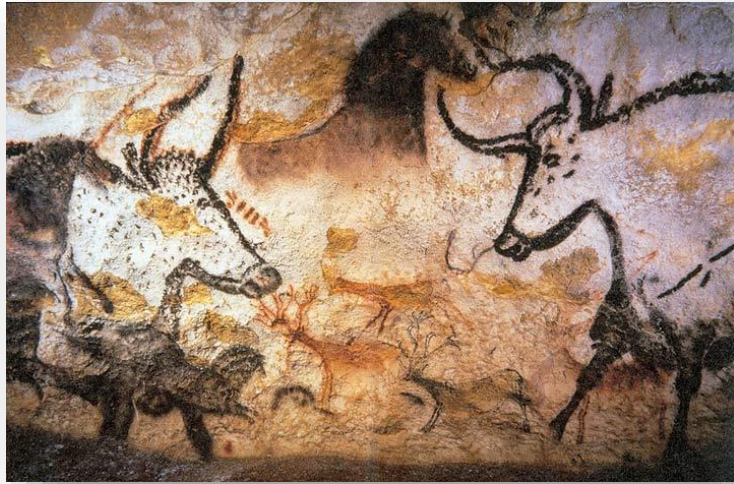


Virtually Real Visions for the Worlds of Tomorrow

- What form?
 - AR, MR, VR?
- What activities?
 - Business, social, playful?
- Who will inhabit these?
 - Elite, everyone, generation-based?
- Who will make and own these?
 - Platforms, states, or commons?
- What will our collection of worlds look like?
 - Utopian, dystopian, like our current world?
- Which realities will we be ranking as more important?



Making Worlds Beyond Meta & Apple's verses



Lascaux Cave (France; 17.000 BCE)



Indigenous Caribbean petroglyphs



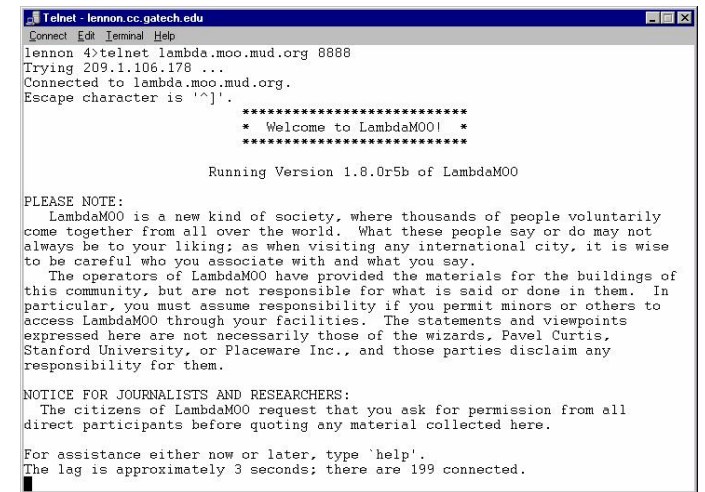
The Villa of Livia (Rome, 1st Century CE)



Indonesian *Wayang* shadowplay



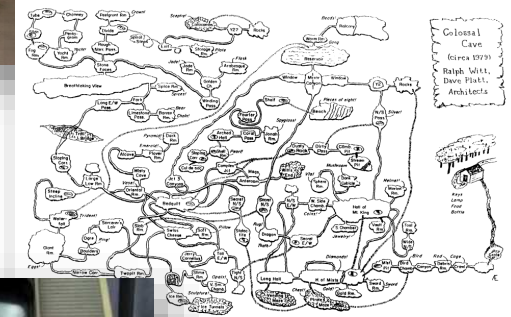
Dungeons and Dragons with Critical Role



LambdaMoo

Metaverses

- Use visual and narrative technologies that have been present for ages.
- Build on a culture, society, and ecology that is rooted in our lived world (good and bad).
 - The Proteus Paradox
- Are surprisingly fragile places!
- Point to a fundamental strain in (Western) conceptions as well as practicalities of reality/actuality
- Are (future) world-building media



Fall, or Dodge in Hell

A book about a future world where everyone moves to a quantum afterlife.

Content Cue: What worlds do you think digital media has/should (not) made real?

