The Dirt on MUDs

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Definition and comparison of MUDs and MUSHs.

I. WHAT IS A MUD
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I. What is a MUD?

- A MUD is a synchronous (real-time) text based multi-user virtual-reality environment on the Internet.
- MUDs are widely used on the Internet as interactive role-playing games.
- A MUD is a text setting which allows users to interact both with their environment and with other users.
- MUD = Multiple User Dimension, Multiple User Dungeon, Multiple User Domain, or Multiple User Dialogue
- MUDs are Constructionist environments in which people build personally meaningful artifacts. MUDs place special emphasis on collaboration, encouraging construction within a social setting.

The original MUDs were adventure games based on the role-playing game, Dungeons and Dragons. In 1979, the first MUD was written by Roy Trubshaw and Richard Bartle on a DECsystem-10
at Essex University in England. The initial idea has evolved over the years
into a client/server architecture. The MUD server manipulates the database
of objects in the virtual world, is programmable in a language that allows
one to extend the set of objects, and accepts network connections from clients.
The client's primary task is to send and receive I/O between the server
and the user.

The MUD server exists on one machine on the network, while the client is
typically run by the users on their own machines. Typically, the MUD server
presents a virtual space organized into "rooms". A "room"
in the MUD terminology, corresponds to a place where characters or objects
may be located. Within a MUD, the primary means of communication is by talking
to other people located in the same room.

Recently MUDs have been seen in a new perspective. While they are used most
often as gaming environments, the software is not constrained to just that
purpose. Instead, it is possible to program an environment in the MUD that
is suitable for socializing and communicating. The MUD becomes a virtual
"place" on the network where people can meet and collaborate on
various projects. MUDs are organized around the metaphor of physical space.
One can "talk" to anyone in the same virtual room. Users can navigate
through and examine a spatially oriented environment, and can communicate
with other users within the context and confines of the particular setting
of the MUD.

Socially, MUDs provide users with a grounded situation in which to interact
with others at near real time speed. In most MUDs characters are anonymous.
Each user takes control of a computerized persona/ avatar/ incarnation character.
When a person first logs onto a MUD, he or she creates a character. The
person selects the character's name and gender, and writes a description
of what the character looks like. It is possible for a character to be male
or female, regardless of the gender of the player. In many MUDs, a character
can also be neuter or even plural.

II. MUD CATEGORIES:

There are many kinds of MUD programs. MUDs are divided into two main categories:
games and purely social environments.

1) The LP family of MUDs continues the gaming tradition of its predecessors
based on role-playing adventure games.

2) TinyMUD is a kind of MUD program more socially oriented. MUCK, MUSH,
and MOO are all variations of TinyMUD. Each is a step away from the game
atmosphere towards MOO, which is the main type of non-game-oriented MUD.

In 1989, James Aspnes, a graduate student at Carnegie Mellon University
created a new type of MUD, called "TinyMUD" which was not an adventure
game. Instead of spending time killing virtual monsters, participants "work"
together to "create" a virtual world. The Tiny- and Teeny- family
of MUDs are usually more social in orientation; the players gather, chat,
meet friends, make jokes, and discuss different issues. Both LPMUD and MUD
nearly always refer to a game with some form of combat, while TinyMUD and
its descendants TinyMUSH, TinyMUCK, and TinyMOO all refer to socially-oriented
MUDs.

III. MUSHes

One descendent of TinyMUD bears the name "MUSH" for "Multiple
User Shared Hallucination". MUSH is a derivative of the original TinyMUD.
A MUSH is a place where players can hang out, socialize, program, and build.
TinyMUSH The second derivative from TinyMUD. TinyMUSH is more efficient
in some ways than TinyMUD, but ends up being larger because of programmed
objects.

Log on to *Switch's* MUSH, *HabiTEXT*

::CrossReference

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