

# SEMANTICS

## *Games, Globalization, and Culture Industry*

**Games:** Activities engaged in for diversion or amusement.

**Globalization:** Worldwide integration of economic, cultural, political, religious, and social systems.

**Culture Industry (CI):** KOCCA term referring to commercial creation of cultural content through film, TV, animation, music, and new media technology (pos. meaning).

**Frankfurt School:** CI = "pop culture" = standardized cultural goods to manipulate people into passivity; cultivates "false needs" (i.e., needs created and satisfied by capitalism); ensures continued obedience to market interests (neg. meaning).



# CONVERGENCE

Theme of **DICON** (Seoul, Sep. 2007).

**Media convergence** (TV, Film, Music, Digital, Telephony).

"Space" convergence - **blurring boundaries** between the virtual ("unreal", "intangible", "mediated") and the physical ("real", "tangible", "unmediated"); bringing the **distant near**.

**Intellectual convergence** - exemplified by the **rise of multi/inter/trans-disciplinary programs** in academia.

Convergence **accelerates** the Culture Industry while fueling the need for "hybrid" approaches to content creation.



# HYBRIDITY

Theme of **YIF** at **CT KAIST** (Daejeon, Sep. 2007).

Hybridity = "mixing" of ideas and methods, exists at the margins, **outside of dominant paradigms**.

**Challenges institutional practices** that have been "disciplined" for hundreds of years.

Encourages use of **appropriation, sampling and re-mix**, and promotes **unintended use** of knowledge and technology.

Driver of **social change** with good potential for **innovation**.

**Games** are at the forefront of this convergence and hybridity, and play a key role in defining it.

# GAME INDUSTRY



**Global:** Games currently 5% GDP; 10% projected by 2012.

**Players (US):** > 60% male, avg age 33, 69% are heads of households, ~8hrs per week on avg, 44% play online games (ESA).

**Dev. costs:** \$400K 1994; \$10M 2005; \$15-25M 2010 (ESA).

**Application areas:** entertainment, military and corporate training, health care, real estate, manufacturing, scientific research, etc.

**Growth areas:** MMOs ([csports.net](http://csports.net)), mobile, learning, augmented reality.



# THE BRIGHT SIDE



Games and Interactive Entertainment **will be to this century** what film & TV have been to the last.

Games **possess unique properties** that make them ideal for communicating complex processes & ideas across many domains, sci, biz, art, edu, etc (ex: **DQ Online**, **EcoRaft**, **EPSS**).

Games will be a cornerstone for **next gen Web** development and services such as **social networking**, **practice-based learning**, **workspaces** & **collaboratories** (ex: **WoW UI**).

Games help **build bridges between cultures** through exposure to language, religion, philosophy, art; and **between academia and industry** through technology transfer and resource exchange (ex: **UCI & DIP** research project).

# THE !BRIGHT SIDE

**EA trip** - using **applied anthropology and sociology** to penetrate and localize the "foreign" (changing values and beliefs vs. understanding and respecting them).

**Increasing homogenization and loss of cultural diversity** in the face of global capital (ex: "Disney-fication" effect - diversity may exist only if subordinated to dominant ideals, i.e., those who are different should assimilate or acculturate).

Reinforcing the **ideology and influence** of globally dominant markets through *sub-contracted production, adaptation and assimilation* (ex: **Top 10 PC titles**, "European-ized" MMOs).



# THE HOPE

Create corporate and educational contexts that:

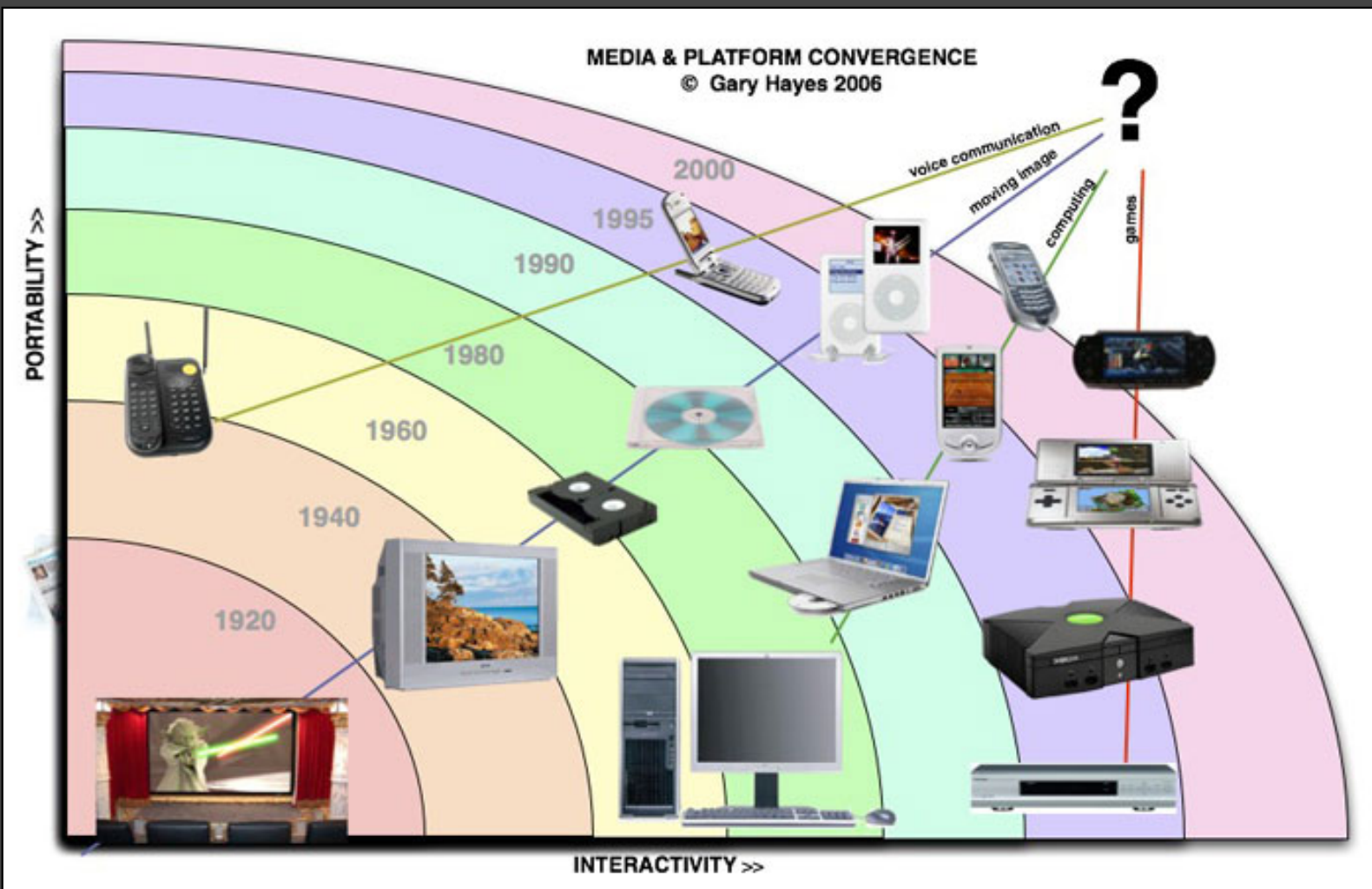
**Respect and retain cultural diversity** in an era of globalization, corporate consolidation, escalating budgets, and risk aversion.

**Embrace unorthodoxy and divergence** in times of *convergence* (ex: *commercial* - EA's **Majestic**, The Sims, **Katamari Damacy**, **Wii**; *UCC* - **Modding**, **Machinima**, "learning" games, science games, language games, feminist games, multicultural games).

**Tools** for UCC and support for **FOSS** (Free and Open Source).

It leads to better business!

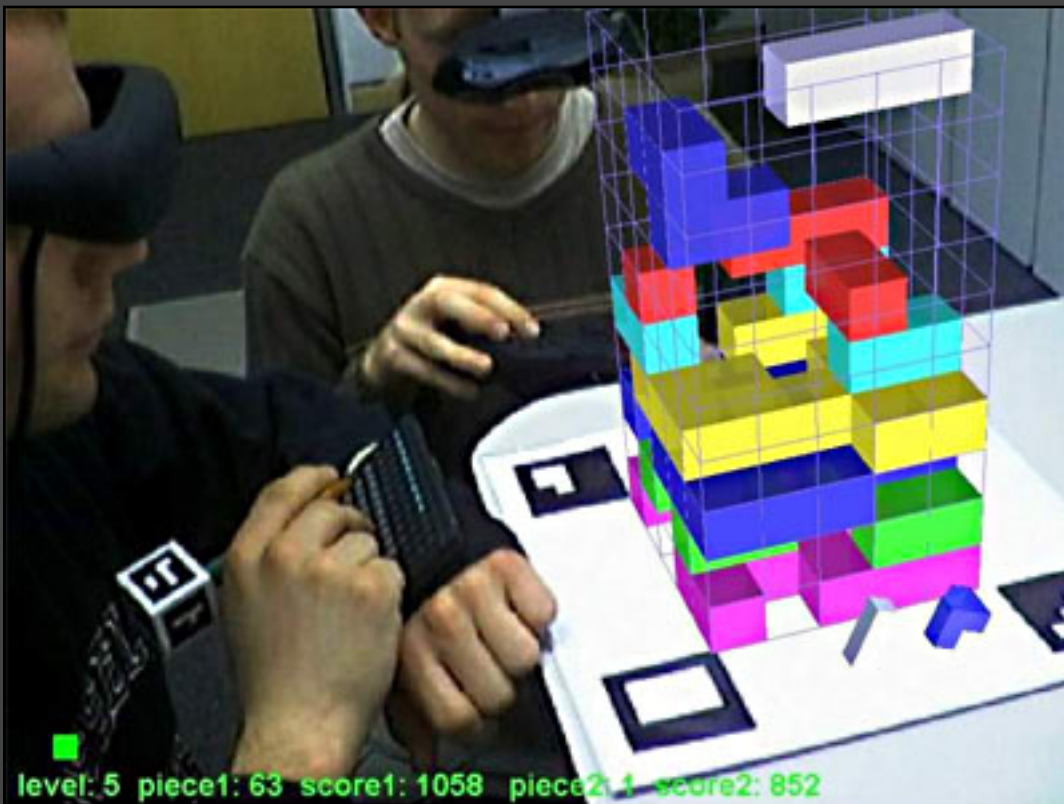
# Media Convergence



- More portable
- More interactive
- More multi-purpose
- More ubiquitous



# "Space" Convergence



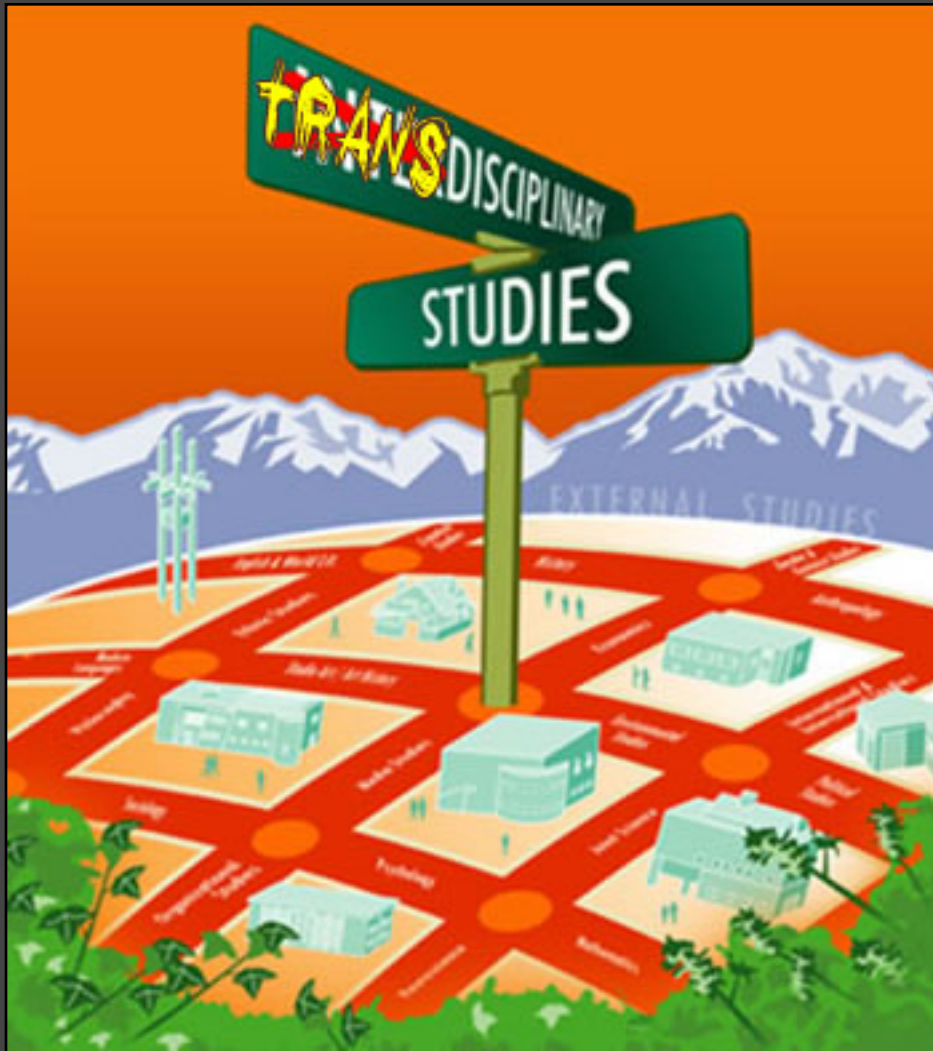
- Blending of realities



- **Multiple simultaneous awareness registers (identity, location, perspective)**



# Idea Convergence



- Emerging fields existing at the intersections of established disciplines
- Hybrid methods and practices
- More experimental
- Symptomatic of sample/remix-culture



# Culture Technology

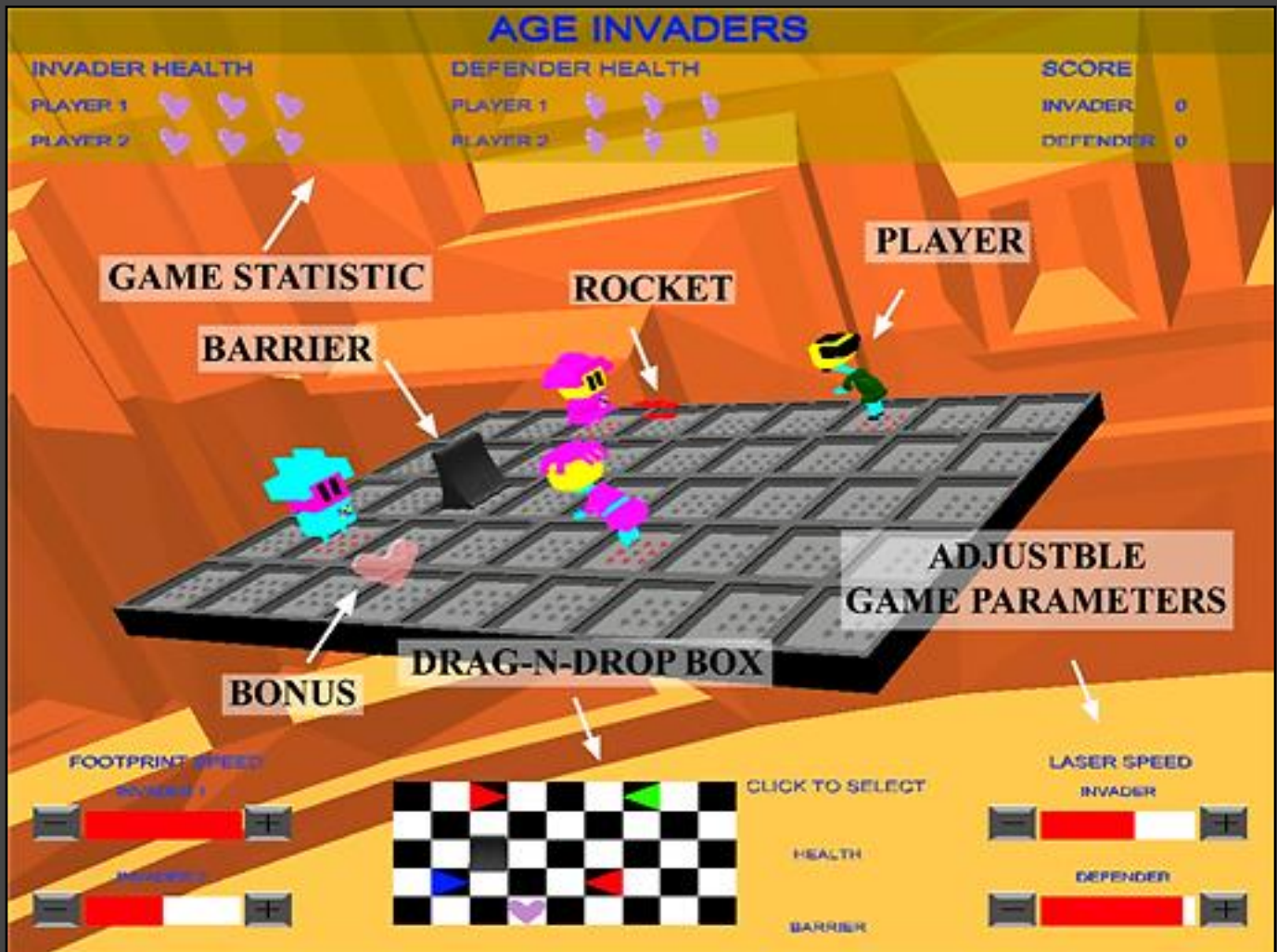
## Young Investigators Forum

KAIST - Sep 8th-9th 2007

**Ji-Sang Han**

**Intergenerational Family Entertainment through Mixed Reality**





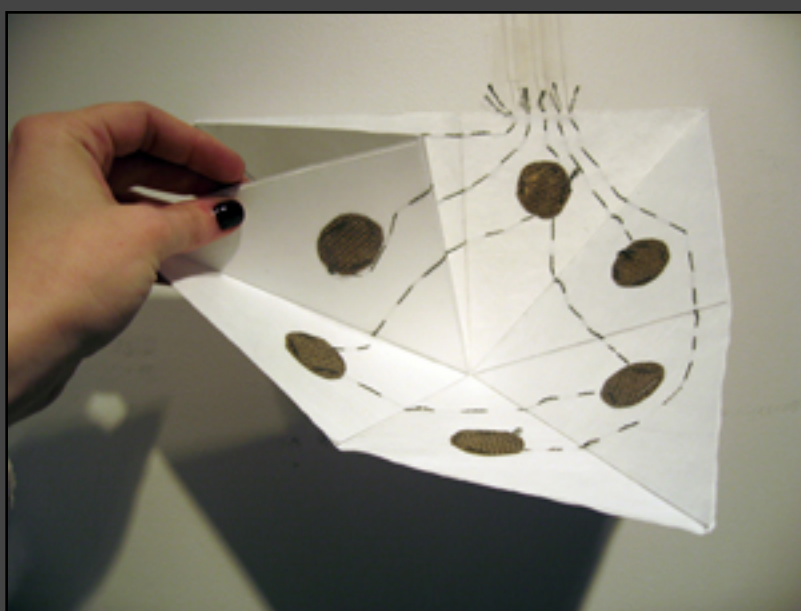
# Taeyoon Choi

## Shoot Me If You Can & DOTPLAY Package





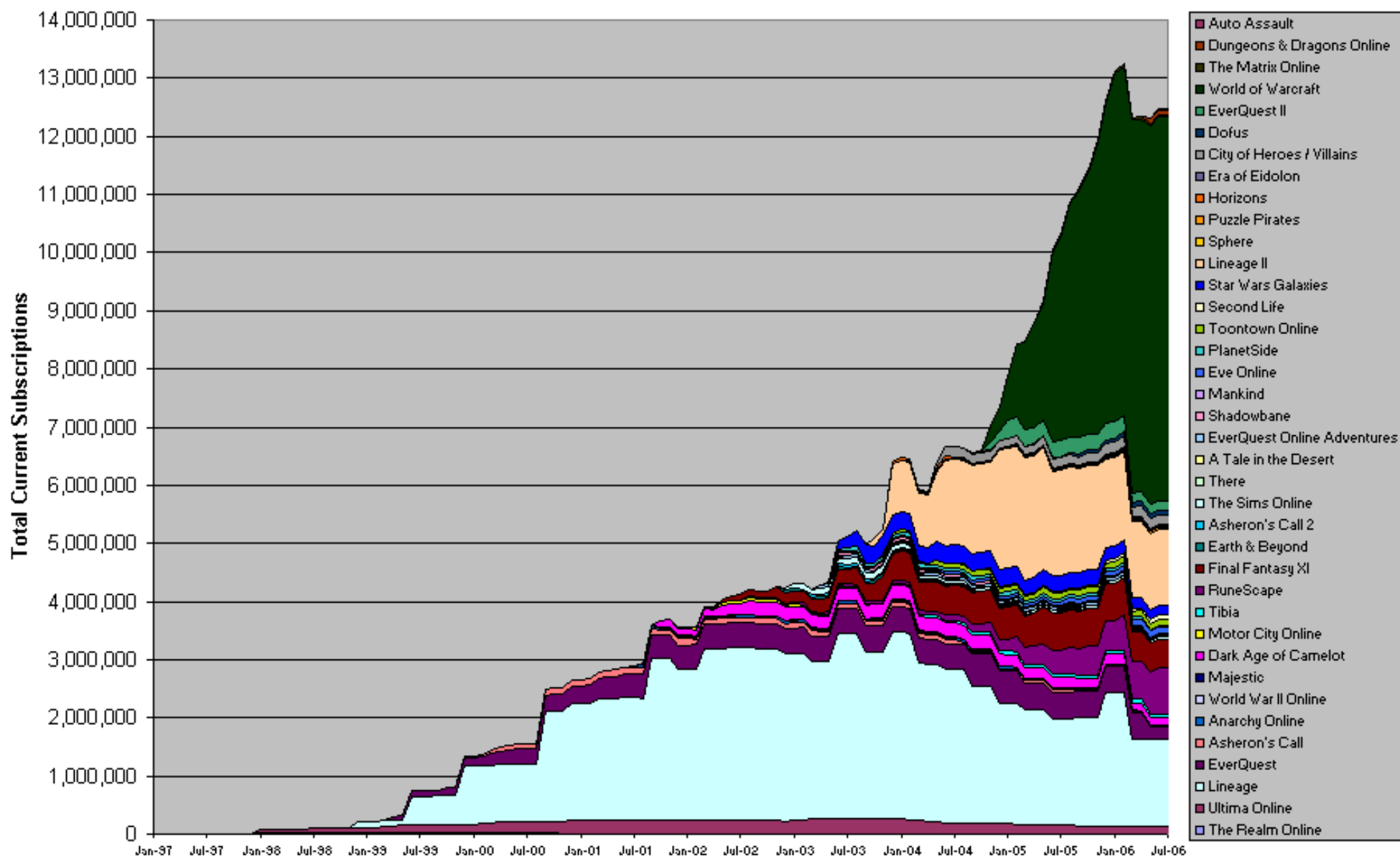
**Joo Youn Paek**  
Zipper Orchestra & Zoonori





# MMOG Subscriptions '06

## Total MMOG Active Subscriptions - Absolute Contribution



## CSPORTS.net Stats

All-time Player Names	625,564,007
Active Players	22,547,342
Player Hours Today	2,655,571
Players Online Now	51,836
Servers Online Now	39,756
Modifications Recorded	3,259
Maps Recorded	726,140
Registered Members	183,606

- **Worldwide ranking and statistics service for online games**
- **Ranks 20 million player names worldwide**
- **Registered user base of over 180,000 users**
- **Serves up to 5 million impressions per month**
- **Players can locate their worldwide ranks and statistics in over 50 games and 3000 modifications**



# Dino Quest

Robert Nideffer and Walt Scacchi '06

## Discovery Science Center - Santa Ana, CA



## Dino Quest Physical Site @ DSC



- Physically embodied interactive museum installation
- Life sciences via paleontology
- Addresses CA science education K-6 standards





- **Gesture-based infra-red emitter and embedded sensor network for tracking player's progress**







- **Narrative-based scientific quest environment**
- **International quest stations/givers - ethnically diverse scientific role models**
- **Live action video (actors) with synthetic laboratory background**



- Multiple on-site quest zones





- Fabricated dig-pits, creatures, caves, and quest update/completion stations
- Earn "Research Points" for each item found



- **GOAL** - Recover DNA samples from two dinosaur remains
- Uplink data collected to laboratories
- Go to Dino Quest Online to bring them back to life

## Dino Quest Online Site





- Browser-based casual game modules that extend and deepen on-site game
- Four Science Learning Game "collaboratories"
- MyLab - physical and online rewards archive
- Dinosphere - Assemble virtual dinosaur via DNA collected from physical site

## CO-LAB 1 - 3 Modules + Challenge





- Dig-Pit, Transport, Reconstruction modules with challenge level

## Dig-Pit



- Fossil discovery

## Transport



- Tagging and identification

## Reconstruction





- Part selection and skeletal building

## CO-LAB 2 - 5 Mini-Games



- Fast-paced, minimal instruction series of games that must be solved in quick succession

## Balance





- Keep relative proportion between head and tail so creature can walk across stage

**Feed**



- Select the appropriate creature (herbivore or carnivore) to eat the food moving down conveyor belt

## Flight





- Adjust the wingspan to allow creature to successfully soar to nest on opposite cliff

## Fight



- Engage in aggressive or defensive combat with predator

Pace





- Adjust leg and body size to keep pace with competitor

## CO-LAB 3 - 2 Modules + Challenge



- Digestive and Circulatory modules with challenge level

## Digestion





- Create a working digestive system by linking internal organs in the proper order

## Circulation - Help & Game

The screenshot displays the Dino Quest Online interface. At the top, there is a toolbar with icons for a hand, a magnifying glass, and navigation controls (play, volume, help, chat, and back). The main area features a diagram of the human circulatory system with red arrows indicating blood flow. The diagram includes the lungs, heart, brain, and a dinosaur's head. A text box in the center reads: "Hello, my young assistant, and welcome back to the Korea co-lab. Are you ready to help me out again? Today we'll be working with another body system, the circulatory system." On the right side, a woman in a white lab coat is holding a dinosaur bone. At the bottom, there is a status bar with various icons and numbers: a blue circle with 0, a yellow circle with 0, an orange circle with 0, a green square with 0, a red cross with 100%, and a purple circle with 177. A green arrow points down to the purple circle.

Hello, my young assistant, and welcome back to the Korea co-lab. Are you ready to help me out again? Today we'll be working with another body system, the circulatory system.

0 0 0 0 100% 177





- Keep the baby T-Rex healthy by sending blood cells to the proper organs

## CO-LAB 4 - 1 Module + Challenge



- Food Chain module with challenge level

## FOOD CHAIN





- Strike a balance between soil, plant and animal

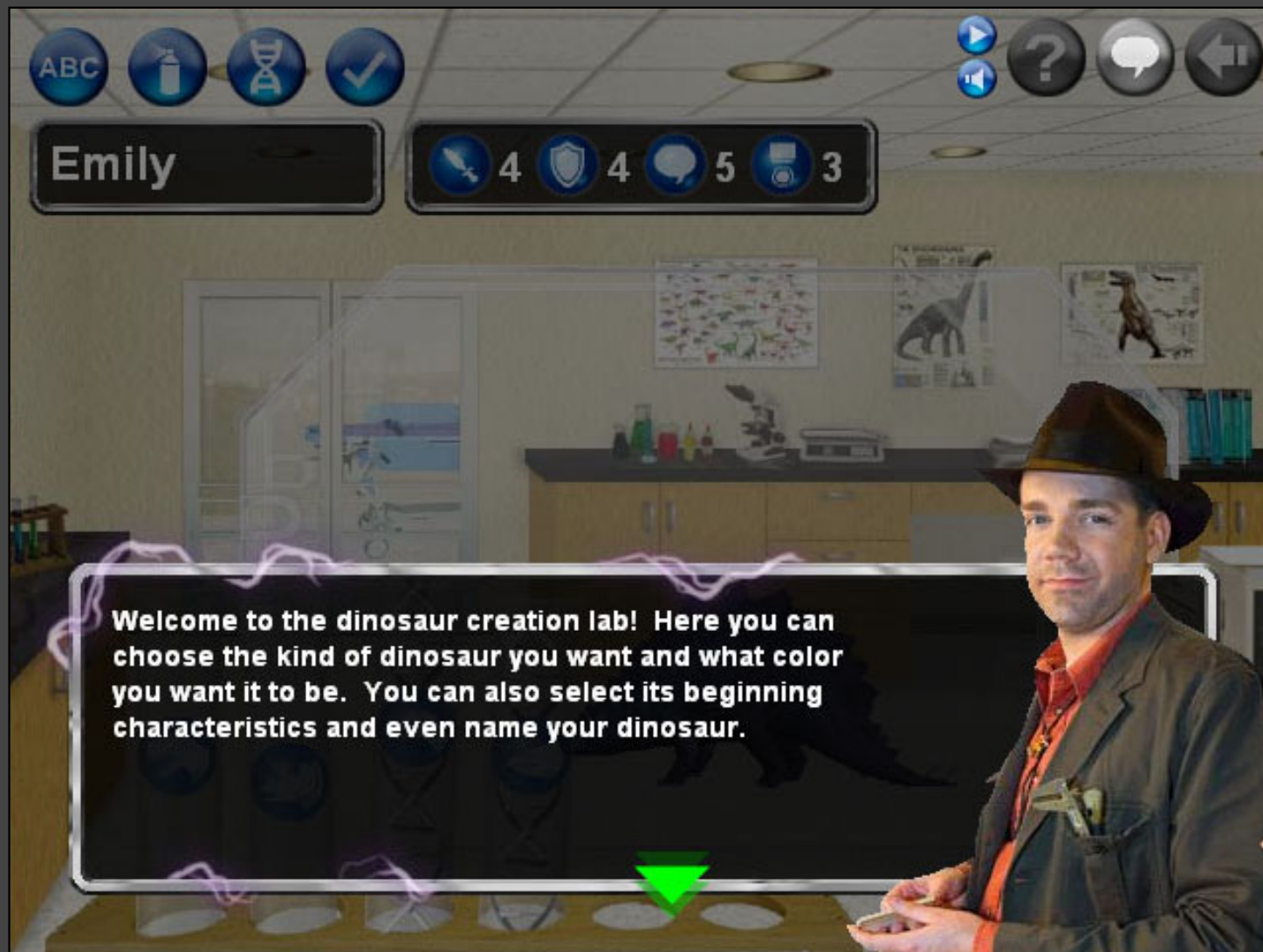
**MY-LAB - Rewards Archive**



- Personal research space where all rewards from on-site and online games are displayed

## DINOSPHERE - Simulation Environment





- Final module unlocked after all others (both on-site and online) are completed

Create



- Enter the remote field station to create a dinosaur from DNA samples found at physical site

**Release**





- Release your creation into the controlled environment

## Mission



- Accept the mission to help your creature survive in the wild

## Meters





- Find and communicate with creatures others have created and released, make friends, fight, travel solo or in groups

**[VIEW SITE](#) - [PLAY INTRO MOVIE](#) - [PLAY DINOSPHERE MOVIE](#)**

# EcoRaft

Bill Tomlinson and Lynn Carpenter '06



- Interactive environment designed to teach people about restoration ecology
- Integrates stationary monitors and mobile tablet PCs
- Allow participants to move species between virtual islands

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## THE GAME





- Peer into the rainforests of Costa Rica
- See flowering plants, trees, and various species of hummingbirds
- You have control over the islands' ecosystems



- Participate in restoration ecology by transporting species
- Use mobile rafts to pick up a seed or bird from one island and deposit it on another





- Once an island has been restored you win

[VIEW SITE - PLAY MOVIE](#)

# Hiperwall

Falko Keuster '06



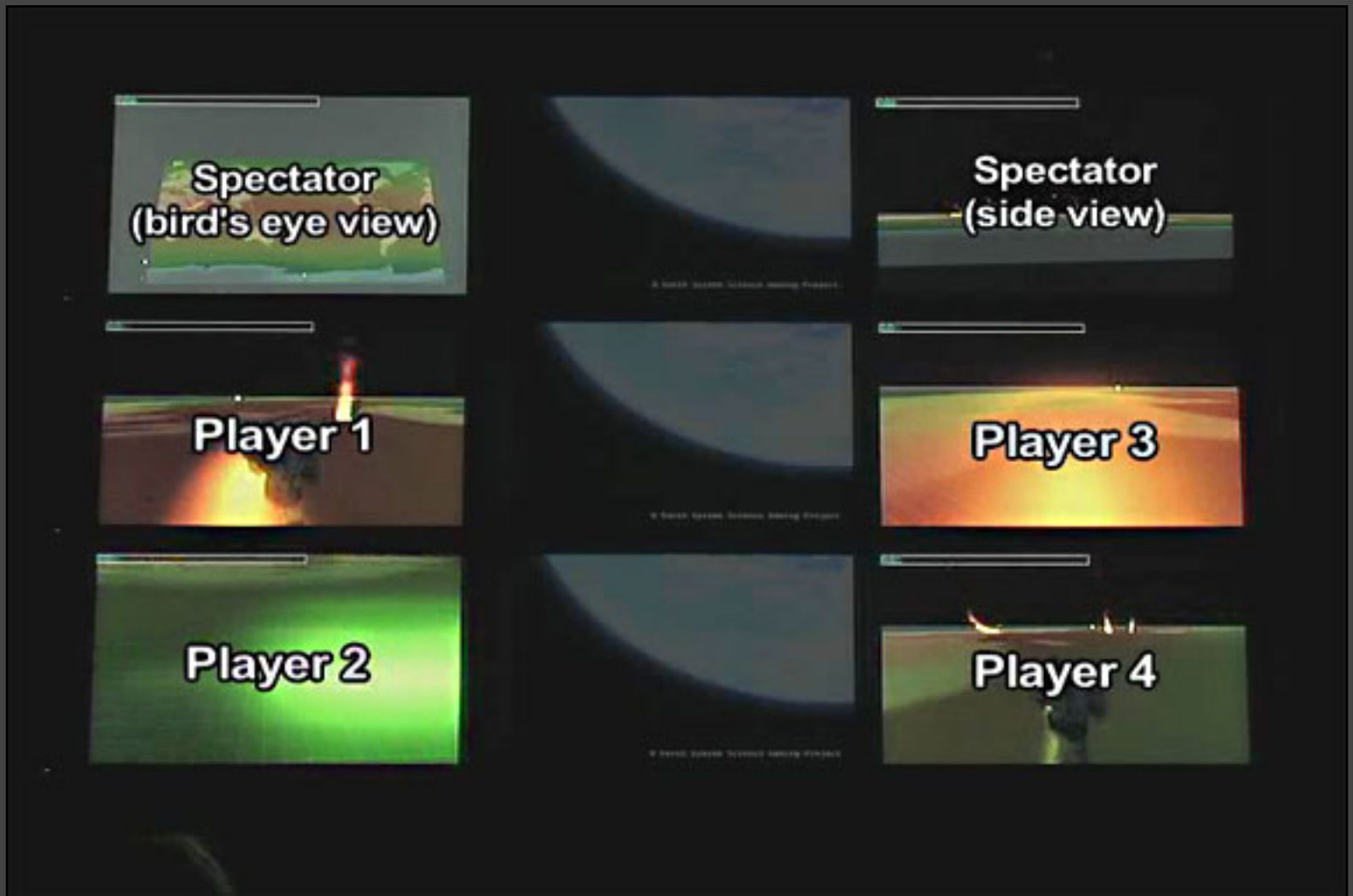
- Highly Interactive Parallelized Display Wall
- Primary focus is on Earth science visualization
- Used to visualize multi-dimensional, time-varying datasets
- Cluster of high-performance commodity computers (28 Mac G5s)
- 56 Apple 30" cinema display tiles operating at a combined resolution of > 200 mega pixels

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## Earth and Planetary System Science Game Engine

Falko Keuster, So Yamaoka, Chris Knox, Gloria Brown  
Simmons '06





- **Develop unconventional scientific visualization strategies in a multiplayer game context**
- **Explore notions of geophysical scale (temporal and spatial)**
- **Model interpretation and data exchange mechanisms**

## Dataset from First Person View with Visualizer Asset



- Focused on geo-spatial registration and navigation using game controllers and other UI components
- Give players the impetus to conceptualize how complex Earth and planetary systems work

**[VIEW SITE](#) - [PLAY MOVIE](#)**



## WoW UI

325 84 82 8/70 36/36/301 6/6/30 0 荣誉 5669/3377 74% DPS: 101.9 211 ms 67.8 MiB

黑翼之巢 9:57 PM

18.52 - 灵魂石复活 - 白洞儿  
0.28 - 治疗石冷却时间

Necrosis 法术计时条

缩小的系统提示  
& SCT 战斗信息

短暂能量护符 完成冷却!

\*\*\* 2秒后发动群体恐惧! \*\*\*

+40 Mana

团队目标  
21 奈法利安 6%

Resist 1099  
伤心雨 230  
战争学徒 1914  
淋淋家的一灿 385  
玄歌 821  
食草行侠 333  
夜之雨枫 120  
小木瓜 593 灵魂石  
雨之呢喃 51  
风之殇 616  
风语语 945 灵魂石  
一条虫 69 OOM  
小丑鱼 灵魂  
雨枫  
Zhuadu 345  
圣手 385  
天使美空 1569 OOM  
小番茄 496  
雪之守护 1106  
吉少 385  
杀手王 385  
贝伦家的单鞋 647  
身高三米 385  
屋之呢喃  
Icedew 1921 OOM  
Soulhacker 魔  
弱冷空气 3751 OOM  
Seluna 83  
冷冰寒  
小油菜 400  
荔枝 OOM  
香水有毒 1469  
Fremont 418  
Rapphine 1738  
斯塔妮娅 531  
梅莉凯之刃 1031  
逆转的轨迹 611  
鸟枪打飞机 2389

职业点名  
「狂野变形」  
2秒后发动群体恐惧!

1035  
2069  
1323 (23%)  
5924 (100%)

126229 (6%)

PP++ 奈法利安 [龙类]

Discord Art 自定义界面贴图

团队状态XRS

常规 (DPS:106.6)	R	S	X
1 Resist 283935 (6.7%)			
2 Icedew 249460 (5.9%)			
3 荔枝 229991 (5.5%)			
4 小油菜 210021 (5%)			
5 淋淋家的一灿 205753 (4.9%)			
6 屋之呢喃 205147 (4.9%)			
7 弱冷空气 198161 (4.7%)			
8 Seluna 195911 (4.7%)			
9 Rapphine 193341 (4.6%)			
10 斯塔妮娅 186765 (4.4%)			
11 梅莉凯之刃 184565 (4.4%)			
12 杀手王 160440 (3.8%)			
13 冷冰寒 158128 (3.8%)			
14 Fremont 154888 (3.7%)			
15 香水有毒 153947 (3.7%)			

团队状态XRS

团队状态XRS	团队状态XRS
离线	0/40
死亡	6/40
MTs	6/7
战士	89%
治疗	39%
DPS	44%
PvP	0/40
Afk	0/40

[2156.12] [6] [杀手王]: 你们两个再说什么ws的事情...  
[2156.15] [6] [身高三米]: 你看看 杀手 裤子都湿了  
[2156.20] [6] [身高三米]: 拿去洗了  
[2156.20] [6] [吉少]:  
[2156.21] [团队通知] (Soulhacker): \*\*\* 5秒后开始点名! \*\*\*  
[2156.21] [6] [屋之呢喃]:  
[2156.25] 奈法利安喊道: 你们也是法师?小心别玩火自焚.....  
[2156.25] [团队通知] (Soulhacker): \*\*\* 法师 - 变形术发动. 注意解除! \*\*\*  
[2156.27] [白洞儿]喊道: \*\*\*玄歌\*\*\*不要怕.我给你加个防恐!!!  
[2156.30] [冷冰寒]上线了!  
[2156.42] 短暂能量护符 完成冷却!

[2156.40] 你受到了狂野变形效果的影响。  
[2156.40] 天使美空的圣光闪现为玄歌恢复了688点生命值。  
[2156.41] Fremont的毒蛇叮刺使奈法利安受到了58点自然伤害。(57点)  
[2156.41] Icedew的痛苦诅咒使奈法利安受到了224点暗影伤害。  
[2156.41] 鸟枪打飞机的狂野变形被移除了。  
[2156.42] 弱冷空气的腐化术使奈法利安受到了255点暗影伤害。  
[2156.42] 逆转的轨迹的毒蛇叮刺使奈法利安受到了101点自然伤害。  
[2156.42] Icedew的腐化术使奈法利安受到了284点暗影伤害。  
[2156.42] 小番茄的圣光闪现发挥极致, 为玄歌恢复了1100点生命值。  
[2156.42] 一条虫的愈合为玄歌恢复了1149点生命值。  
[2156.43] 小木瓜对你施放了驱散魔法。  
[2156.43] Icedew的痛苦诅咒使奈法利安受到了186点暗影伤害。

[2156.43] [团队通知] (Soulhacker): \*\*\* 2秒后发动群体恐惧! \*\*\*



[2156.43] 你的狂野变形被移除了。

- Custom layout and complex feedback systems (raid & party status, abilities, multi-channel chat, combat stats, Cooldowns, context maps, net latency)
- highly collaborative
- Intensive "play" that's quite a bit of work
- How might this carry over into other domains?



# Top 10 Korean PC Games

7/24/07 Gametrics and ItemMania

## 1. Sudden Attack



Genre: FPS, Developer: GameHi

## 2. StarCraft



Genre: RTS, Developer: Blizzard

### 3. World of WarCraft





**Genre: MMORPG, Developer: Blizzard**

## **4. Special Force**



Genre: FPS, Developer: Dragonfly

## 5. Lineage 2





**Genre: MMORPG, Developer: Hanbit Soft**

## **6. Lineage**



Genre: MMORPG Developer: NC Soft

## 7. WarCraft 3





Genre: RTS, Developer: Blizzard

## 8. Dungeon & Fighter





Genre: RPG, Developer: Neople

## 9. Audition





**Genre: Arcade/MMO, Developer: T3 Entertainment**

## **10. FIFA Online**



Genre: Sports, Developer: EA / Neowiz

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**GAMASUTRA**  
The Art & Business of Making Games

PRINT 

## The State Of Korea: PC Games

By [Nick Rumas](#)

The world of PC gaming in Korea never fails to surprise. When I first arrived here over six years ago, I was amazed at the sheer penetration of high-speed internet and the widespread obsession with online play across all age levels, and I still am to this day. While the well-known staples of the Korean PC gaming diet are generally held to be *StarCraft* and *WarCraft* in the West, there's a lot more to it than just that.



First of all, in order to understand the way PC gaming works here in Korea, it's necessary to get an idea of what's happening on the actual retail scene. The answer to that, for better or worse, is that there's not much going on at all, and it's been this way for as long as virtually anyone can remember.

I was rather shocked by it at first; I'd ask friends where the game shops were, because, I'd reason, if everyone is playing this software, there must be the Korean equivalent of a GameStop or EB Games on every corner, right? Wrong. Before we go further into that, though, let's take a look at the most recent top five list for retail sales of PC games to see what's moving off the shelves, courtesy of Korea's Game Industry Total Information Service System (GITISS).

1. *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (EA)
2. *Princess Maker 5* (Fujitsu)
3. *Command & Conquer 3: Tiberium War* (EA)
4. *The Sims 2* (EA)

## 5. *Transformers* (Activision)

At the end of the day, the above list doesn't mean much at all. While exact sales figures are not available, it's safe to say that they're not going to be anything noteworthy. Going to the store to buy the latest PC game just isn't a big thing in Korea.

To give you an idea of what things are like, I'll use the area in which I live -- Yangju, a northern suburb of Seoul well within reach of the massive Seoul Metro -- as an example. The population, mostly made up of overflow from Seoul proper, is nearly 200,000, but there isn't a single dedicated games store to be found in the entire city. The closest would be in the neighboring city of Uijeongbu (population of around 450,000), but even there, you'll only find one fledgling shop in the dark recesses of an underground mall.



The shop owner is a friend of mine, and he'll be the first to tell you that selling PC games in Korea is a dead end; he makes his money by selling console games, the kind that aren't copied so easily.

Even in Yongsan, the retail capital of Korean gaming, there are virtually no customers that come looking for new, legitimate PC games, and as such, hardly any are sold.

Overall, it's a market that barely exists. Granted, every big box retailer -- Lotte Mart, E-Mart, Samsung Tesco HomePlus, etc. -- has a sizeable PC games section, but there generally isn't a whole lot of

action going on in it.

There are two main factors that contribute to this. First of all, when it comes to new PC games sold at stores, the vast majority of those interested just download them illegally. In Korea, the consensus among the masses is that P2P downloading is a reality that must be accepted and can't be avoided. It's completely commonplace, and has been for years. Additionally, even if someone doesn't download a certain game personally, they can just as easily make the trek to Yongsan and buy a pirated copy of the title for a fraction of its retail price.

That's not to say that there are none who are opposed to illegal downloading; there certainly are -- at least a few -- but such individuals make up a very small and insignificant minority in comparison with those who support such practices or who don't care one way or the other.



It must be understood that minimum wage in Korea is still quite low by Western standards, while cost of living is high, not to mention fast on the rise. In many cases, products are more expensive here than in the US. As such, when Koreans are faced with the dilemma (if it can even be called that) of whether to pay full price for PC games or download them for free, it's a non-issue for most.

The interesting thing is that this extends even to those with disposable income. To illustrate, I have a friend who is the president and founder of a very successful design firm in Seoul, and one day when the subject of a particular title came up, he immediately exclaimed how he'd recently downloaded it and what a big fan he was.

It's very much a 'topless woman at the French Riviera' scenario -- illegally downloading games in Korea is nothing if not completely and utterly normal, so much so that purchasing a game at full price can be seen as something of an oddball behavior. Where possible, the same applies to console games, but that's for another article.

The second reason for the lack of any major retail presence for new PC games in Korea is the fact that most popular online titles from domestic developers -- and it must be noted that if a PC game isn't online, it generally won't find much of an audience here at all -- are free to download and play; some operating on a micro-transaction system of customization, some with a subscription fee to play, and others just plain free.

The companies and individuals that took risks and made use of such systems from the beginning generally went on to reap huge rewards. While a rather recent example, Nexon's *Kart Rider* became such a huge phenomenon because of the fact that, despite being a rather blatant rip-off of *Mario Kart*, it was free, for the most part well designed, and immediately accessible to players of any and all age groups. Though it's now significantly lessened in popularity, the game was a true national phenomenon in its heyday, one that's going to be remembered for years to come.



Central in all of this is the role of the internet cafe, or as it's called here, the PC Bang (that's 'ah' as in 'on'), meaning 'PC Room'. While there are many gamers who also play at home, the PC room is where the real action is at, largely because of the fact that you can find them virtually anywhere, they always feature a good selection of the most popular online titles, and perhaps most importantly, subscription fees to the games that require them are already taken care of.

Rates are very reasonable for non-members, around 1000~2000 Won an hour, which corresponds to about a dollar or two USD. The hardcore, however, mostly have paid memberships to their bang of choice, and whenever possible, they vegetate all through the

night, subsisting on a not-so-healthy diet of spicy ramen ('ramyun' as it's called here), cigarettes, and the ever popular canned coffee, either hot or cold.

Years back, I gave this this witch's brew a try, minus the cigarettes, and it left me feeling so awful the next day that I had to go to the doctor. Not recommended.

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So now let's take a look at the list that matters -- the top ten online games at PC rooms in Korea -- and break down each of the titles and their respective developers. Here they are as of 7/24, this time courtesy of Gametrics, Korea's leading online gaming information tracking service. Also, take note of each entry's item sales ranking, provided by ItemMania.

### 1. *Sudden Attack*

Genre: FPS

Developer: GameHi

Publisher: NetMarble (CJ Internet)

Item sales ranking: 5

A massively popular online FPS, this one's been at the top of the list for thirty-six weeks. One of the game's main draws is its upgrade system, which operates on both cash and points earned in-game. There are a variety of payment methods, including home phone/cell phone billing, and tie-in promotions with mobile carriers SK Telecom and KTF enable in-game 'cash' to be acquired through the voluntary submission of a users' private info -- phone numbers, etc. -- for pesky advertising schemes.

### 2. *StarCraft*

Genre: RTS

Developer: Blizzard

Publisher: Blizzard

Item sales ranking: N/A

Nearly ten years old and still showing no sign of letup, it seems that the only game capable of replacing *StarCraft* will be its sequel, announced in Seoul this past May. And yes, you can still watch professional matches on TV any hour of the day.

### 3. *World of Warcraft*



Genre: MMORPG

Developer: Blizzard

Publisher: Sonokong

Item sales ranking: 17

As with *StarCraft*, not a whole lot to say here. Koreans love all things *WarCraft* almost as much as they do *StarCraft*, and though this MMORPG hasn't been around as long as its RTS counterparts, it shows no sign of slowing down any time soon. Let's just hope we don't hear any more stories of child neglect due to WoW addiction in the near future.

#### 4. *Special Force*

Genre: FPS

Developer: Dragonfly

Publisher: Neowiz Games

Item sales ranking: 16

Not to be confused with the anti-Israeli first-person shooter from Islamic organization Hezbollah, this popular Korean online FPS features upgradeable characters and weapons for a highly customized play experience. As is the trend with many popular online games, items and upgrades can be purchased via mobile phone.



## 5. *Lineage 2*

Genre: MMORPG

Developer: Hanbit Soft

Publisher: NCsoft

Item sales ranking: 6

The sequel to NCsoft's massively popular original, *Lineage 2*'s subscription-based nature makes it a good fit for PC rooms. Though *Lineage 2* is more popular than its predecessor, its item sales trail behind by three places, according to ItemMania.



## 6. *Lineage*

Genre: MMORPG

Developer: NC Soft

Publisher: NC Soft

Item sales ranking: 3

Like *StarCraft*, *Lineage* is another online title that's been going strong for nearly ten years. While it may not have seen much success in the West, the game was at one time subscribed to by over three million gamers, mostly Korean.

## 7. *WarCraft 3*

Genre: RTS

Developer: Blizzard

Publisher: Hanbit Soft

Item sales ranking: N/A

The same goes for *WarCraft 3* as for *StarCraft* and *WoW* – no amount of Blizzard action is enough for Koreans. Kudos to the company for repaying its most loyal fans with the Worldwide Invitational it threw in May at Seoul's Olympic Park.

## 8. *Dungeon & Fighter*

Genre: RPG

Developer: Neople

Publisher: Samsung Electronics

Item sales ranking: 2

This awkwardly named RPG, very popular among mid-teens, features 2D sprite graphics and real-time action combat. Like most popular online Korean games, pay-to-customize options and product cross-promotions abound.

## 9. *Audition*

Genre: Arcade/MMO

Developer: T3 Entertainment

Publisher: Yedang Online

Item sales ranking: 31

Based on a massively popular Korean comic book series, *Audition* has become quite a gaming phenomenon as well, with editions now available for the PSP and cell phone.

It's basically a dancing game with MMO features and microtransactions for the purchase of clothing, accessories, etc. Recently, there have been news reports of this game being used by middle-aged men to try and lure in female middle and high school students.

## 10. *FIFA Online*

Genre: Sports

Developer: EA / Neowiz

Publisher: Neowiz Games

Item sales ranking: 14

Koreans love soccer, and while Konami's *Winning Eleven* holds more popularity on the console scene, EA's *FIFA Online* -- made in Korea in collaboration with Neowiz/Pmang -- continues to be quite popular for online play.

Elaborating on a few points from the above list, the prevalence of microtransactions -- selectable and payable through diverse means, with a large emphasis on cell phone transactions -- and product cross-promotions cannot be overstated. Go to any of the above games' official sites, and you'll be met with a dizzying array of flashy links and logos begging for your attention, money, and/or personal information.

This style is very much in the same vein as that of the average busy nighttime street in Seoul -- thousands of flashing neon lights and bright signs against a black background, all fighting to be seen and trying desperately lure in the passerby. Visitors find excitement and charm in such





scenes, but when it comes to online gaming, this kind of attack on the senses is really quite a turn-off for the average Western gamer.

That, in a nutshell, is where the PC gaming industry in Korea currently finds itself. Physical retail is dead, and while that isn't going to change any time soon, it's a rather insignificant issue, because the online market is the only one that really matters here.

Piracy is obviously here to stay, but the industry wise have gotten around that issue and found phenomenal success through subscriptions and microtransactions, the former of which has been massively aided by PC rooms, and the latter of which has found a convenient host in the cell phone.

The world of PC gaming in Korea may massively dwarf that of consoles, but Sony, Nintendo and Microsoft are engaged in their own little war on the peninsula, as well. Stay tuned for an upcoming report on the details of that war, as we analyze the state of the console industry in Korea.

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