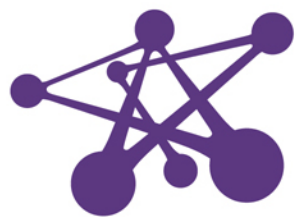


Game Developers Conference® | March 9-13, 2010 | Moscone Center | San Francisco, CA



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Why Do People Buy Virtual Goods?

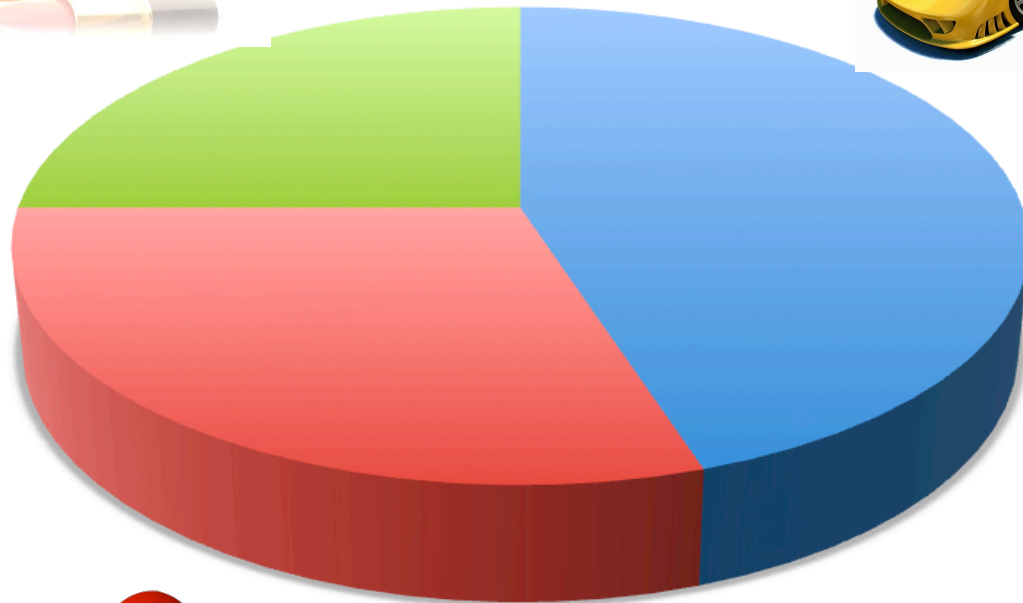
Ten Attributes That Influence Item
Desirability 

Vili Lehdonvirta

Helsinki Institute for
Information Technology
Virtual Economy Research Network



Focus on user needs?



Focus on game mechanics?



Focus on the virtual goods themselves



Attribute 1: Performance

	Item	Mean price
	Ice pick	23 000
	+2 Ice pick	30 000
	+4 Ice pick	55 000
	+7 Ice pick	99 000

Ragnarok Online (2002)



Attribute 2: Functionality



Wing Boots

With these boots, your pet will move to mesos/items dropped by monsters to collect them. Applies only to your monster spoils if not equipped with Magic Scales. Applies only with combination of which items you are equipped with. (Meso Magnet, Item Pouch)



Binocular

With this Binocular AND Wing Boots, your pet will move to mesos/items dropped by monsters to collect them in a wider range than solely equipping Wing Boots.

MapleStory (2003)



Master builder (👷1)

Building: 🕒

✗ Main Building (Level 2)

✗ Main Building (Level 3)

0:43:09 hrs.

done at 18:42



Travian (2004)



Attribute 3: Visuals and sounds

Second Life (2003)



Attribute 4: Background fiction



Uncharted Waters Online (2004)

Attribute 5: Provenance



Habbo (2000)

Attribute 6: Customizability



Lineage (1998)

Attribute 7: Cultural references



IRC-Galleria (2000)



Attribute 8: Licenses



Elf from *Lineage*



Character *Sam-Soon Kim* from a TV drama



Ken from *Street Fighter*



A Korean supermodel



Catwoman from the movie

Cyworld (1999)



Attribute 9: Rarity



Folded Sheet		0	Server Birth Rare	10,000,000	15,000,000
Gold Box		0	Obtained from a bug	500,000	1,000,000
Horse Dung		0	Server Birth Rare	50,00,000	60,000,000
Large Rocks		0	Daily Spawn	25,000	50,000
Large Vase		0	Craftable	500,000	600,000
Light Fur		0	No longer spawns	500,000	600,000

UO Treasures.com

Ultima Online (1997)

Attribute 10: Price

Playray (2004)



"we call him the King of Playray, because he has the super-expensive 150-coin crown"



Ten virtual item attributes

1. Performance

2. Functionality



Instrumental attributes

3. Visuals & sounds

4. Background fiction



Hedonic attributes

5. Provenance

6. Customizability

7. Cultural references

8. Licenses



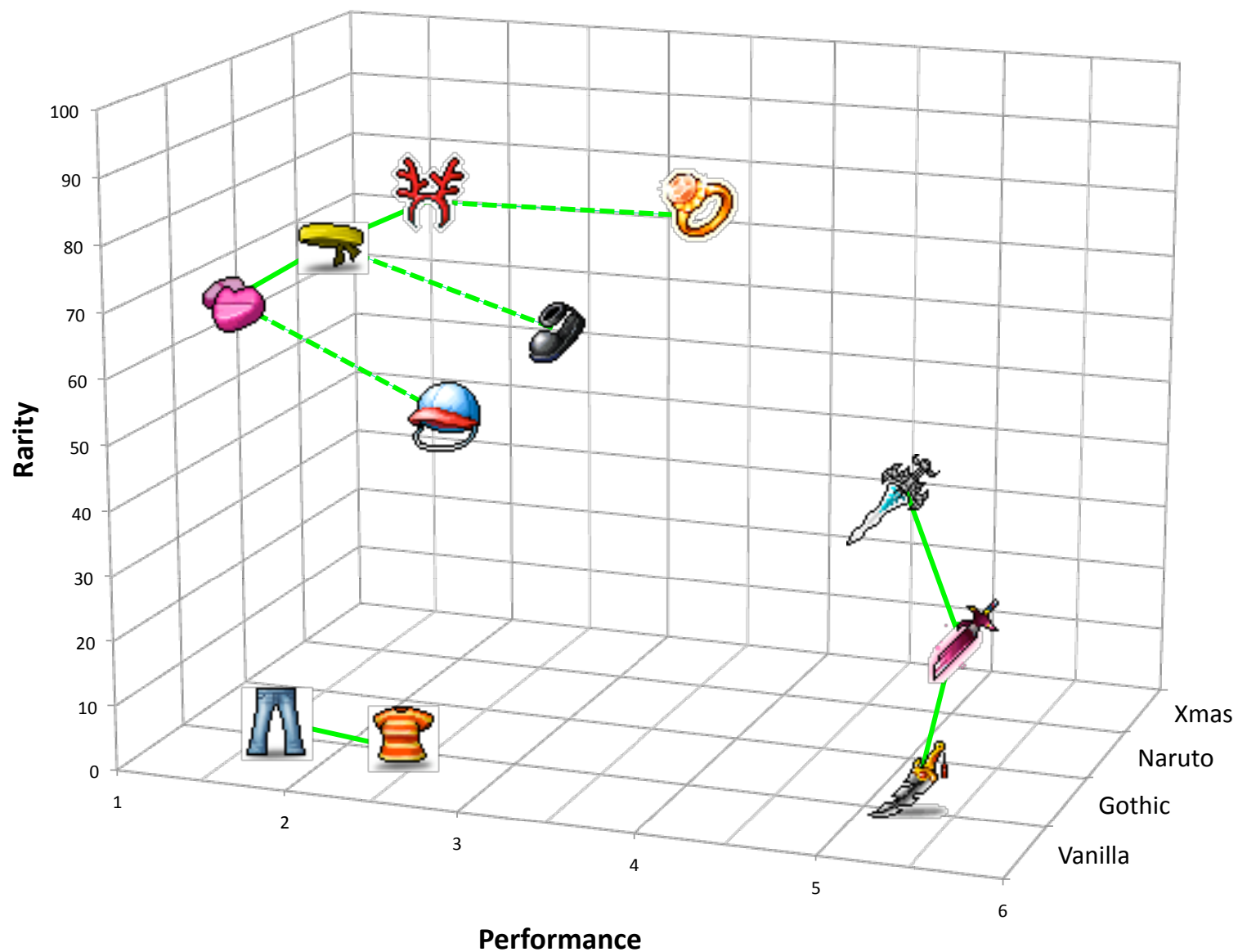
Social attributes

9. Rarity

10. Price



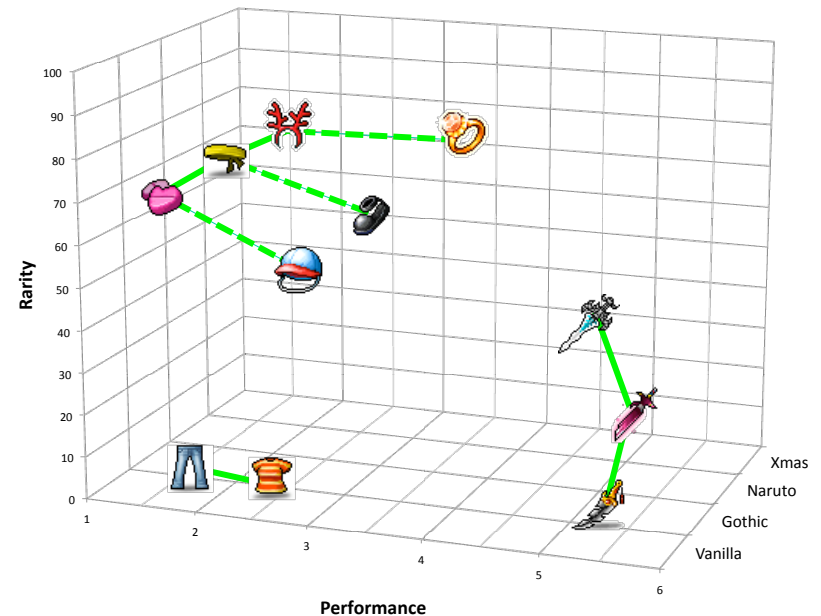




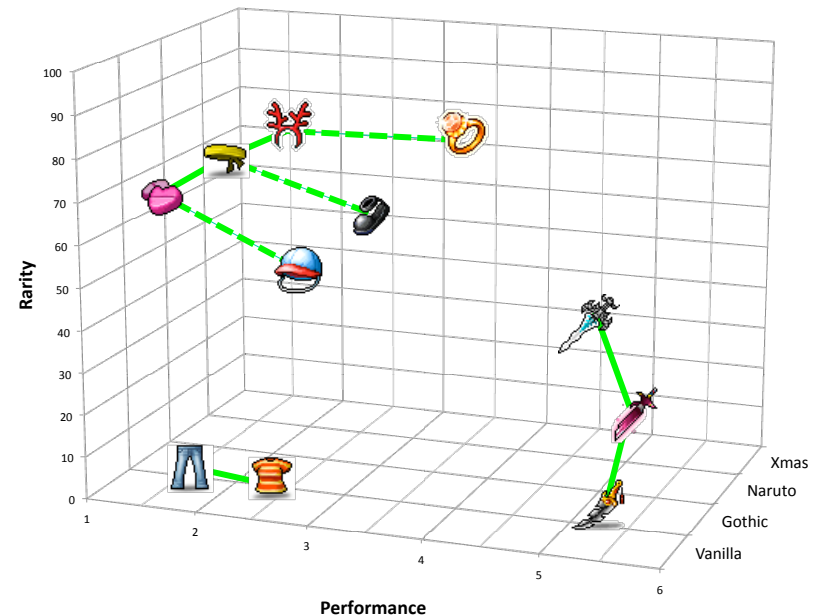


10-dimensional design space for virtual items

- ⌚ All dimensions exploited?
- ⌚ Full spectrum?
- ⌚ Any gaps?
- ⌚ Upgrade paths available?
- ⌚ Balance?



- ⚙️ All dimensions exploited?
- ⚙️ Full spectrum?
- ⚙️ Any gaps?
- ⚙️ Upgrade paths available?
- ⚙️ Balance?



Thanks for listening! 💜
<http://www.hiit.fi/~vlehdonv>