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Using Creative Design to Monetize Virtual Worlds

By
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Iron Realms Entertainment

"A wise man should have money in his head, not his heart." – Jonathan Swift

Hourly Metering

- MegaWars – Genie: $36/hour during daytime.
- Worlds Away - Compuserve: Up to ~$20/hour
- Neverwinter Nights - AOL: Up to 6$/hour

AOL Goes Monthly

- Average Hourly usage rises from 7 hours/month to 23 hours/month.
- AOL's user base grows to 10 million.
- Many online games, such as Gemstone III from Simutronics, migrate to web, but also go monthly.

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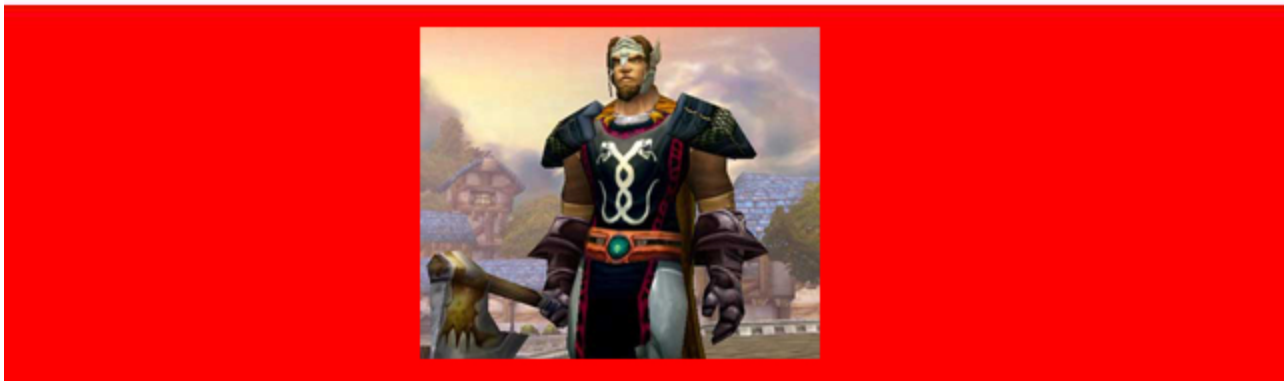
Flat ‘Needs’ Profile



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Curved Needs Profile

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The Power of Design

Avalon's Sleeplearning

- Spend time online, raise your skills.
- **Problem**: Phone charges are pricey.
- **Solution:** Offer ability to raise skills while offline.
- That's $575/month for a player sleeplearning 24 hours/day.

Auctions to Retail

- Achaea began by holding auctions for custom/unique items.
- Expanded to regular auctions w/ mix of repeat and unique items.
- Moved to in-game “retail” stores by player demand. Artifact sales went up.
- Even though some PvP-oriented items sell for hundreds, we get virtually no complaints about the model.
- Moving to a retail model was Achaea’s chainsaw.

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Three Way Transactions

(Everybody Wins!)

- Leeroy is time-rich, but cash-poor.

- NinjaGuy17 is time-poor, but cash-rich.

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Three Way Transactions

(Everybody Wins!)

- NinjaDude17 buys credits from Iron Realms.
- Leeroy plays a lot, makes a lot of gold.
- NinjaDude17 puts credits for sale on credit market.
- Leeroy buys the credits with gold.

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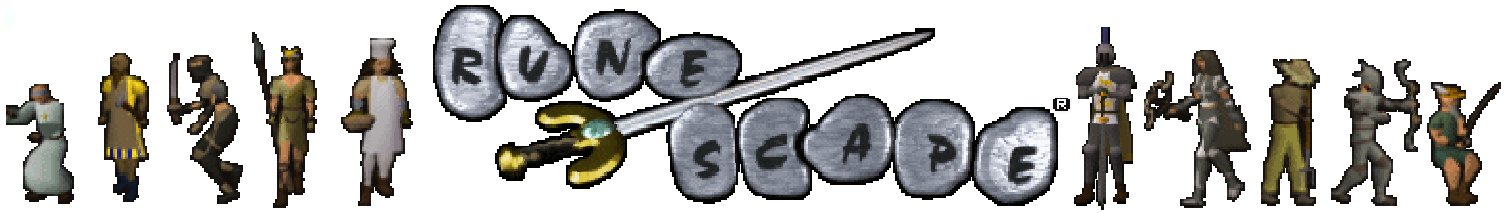

- Free-to-Play servers (f2p) w/ restricted world.
- Pay-to-Play servers (p2p) for $5/month.

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Sherwood RPG

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Sherwood RPG

- Procedurally-generated (small) world, with infinite-depth dungeon.
- Gets paid to funnel players to other MMOs.
- Permits web game portals to run Sherwood RPG as their own as long as the Google ads are displayed. Only locally caches character info as a result.
- 100,000 uniques/month.

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Virtual Laguna Beach

Virtual Laguna Beach

- Monetized in multiple ways.
- Virtual stuff (t-shirts, etc).
- Extensive product placement (Secret, Pepsi)
- VoIP for $6/month is coming.
- All of this dovetails with the “Laguna Beach” experience.

Summary

- Know the value of your experience.
- Find ways in which your interests dovetail with your users' interests.
- It's about enabling your players, not tricking them.