



Weekly Newsletter #4 - February 10, 2012

Distilling Ideas

The week began with a review of what was learned in each of the previous week's meetings. The feedback gained had provided the team with a variety of perspectives and nicely framed the project's next steps. A key point of interest was that of approaching two groups - the more altruistic and the less altruistic - as well as focusing on two aspects of the project - the human interaction at its core, and the virtual framework, or game layer supporting it. This focus led the team into categorizing the conceptualized game models into a Plan A and B.

Plan A incorporated the Tree Framework idea with the core human interaction of exchanging cards or bracelets prompting players to perform good deeds. Plan B was formed around the idea of creating a collectible trading card game around the interaction. However, there were still problems associated with the card interaction - namely the risk of such an exchange coming off as disingenuous. By doing a good deed for someone, only to follow up by handing the recipient a card asking for something in return (relating back to the game), the very spirit of Pay it Forward would be broken. The team needed to focus more on the human experience and means of solving this dilemma.

The Human Experience

The team met with Linda Swaney of Habitat for Humanity to understand more about charity psychology, and the meeting clarified much about human nature with regards to altruism. Recognizing that volunteers want to feel good by helping others really brought people's motivations into focus - the self-serving needs component was something this project would need to take advantage of rather than ignore. Thus, the value of raising awareness became something the team began to zero-in on. Additionally, the notions of accountability and empowerment for recipients of goodwill were brought to attention.

Thus, after some thought, the team decided to focus Plan A around an "Anonymous Post" type human interaction, rather than a direct hand-off from one player to another. By leaving a card in a public place, anyone who gets involved with it would be doing so fully voluntarily, free of any guilt or feelings of being used. The card also could become a fairly compelling object through mystery, if themed properly. The team then worked this human interaction into the game model that utilizes the Tree framework, leaving the possible use of a trading card game in a separate pocket as a Plan B.

Moving Forward

Next Wednesday (2/15) the team will undergo Quarter-Semester Walk-arounds at the ETC,



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in which faculty will visit the room in 20-minute increments to absorb information about the project and offer feedback and perspective. It will be a time for the team to take advantage of the resources available in the building, and from getting the takes of faculty from different backgrounds, an evaluation of the project's direction can be made. Ideally, in the days following the walk-around, the team will be able to commit to a direction and begin the development phase of this project.

In preparation of the event, the team will be creating a physical display of the semester's thought-process, mapping out and diagramming the Plan A game concept, mocking up art, and investigating tech frameworks, as well as theming the room to match the project's focus. It is an exciting time for Project Glatitude, as the design has definitely begun to hit its stride. Look forward to the team's post-quarters report, and have a great week!