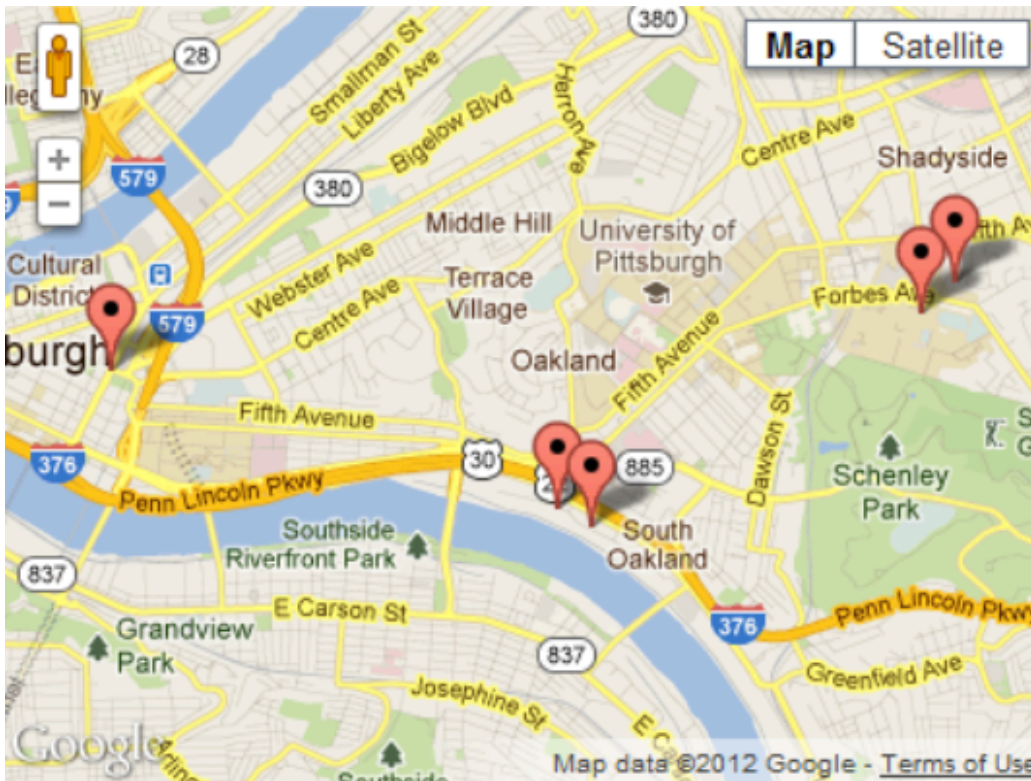




Week 9 Newsletter - March 16, 2012

And, We're Back!

When we last left our heroes, the team was dispersing to attend GDC and partake of spring break, using the opportunity to spread prototype *kindworks* cards around different locations. Already, the cards have received 25 total hits across 3 general areas. A few have even received hits in different locations, suggesting that passersby took it upon themselves to move around the cards.



During the past two weeks time, the team's Halves Presentation has been taking shape, and art, design, and programming have all been moving forward. Work on the Web interface for all of the pages has been ongoing, and there is an asset for nearly all of the pages. A Site Map has been created and is being used as a shared reference point between programming and art. The design document for the experience has also been substantially expanded.



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Overview

Abstract

Kindworks is a global kindness initiative in which people work together to build and power virtual **Machines** by performing **good deeds** in their everyday lives.

The experience is comprised of an **online game component** in which players build virtual **Machines** by putting **Gears** together, and a **real-world action component** in which people perform **good deeds**, leaving behind **Calling Cards** to attract others to the game.

A player may choose to place a **Calling Card** if (s)he **performs a good deed**, **receives a good deed**, or **witnesses a good deed** occur between others.

Every **Gear** in a virtual **Machine** represents a **good deed** in the real world, and **Machines** act as visualizations of the networks that are formed when one **good deed** inspires another. Players need to work together and inspire others in order to add to the **Machines** they are building together.

Calling Cards act as "blueprints" for **Gears** in an online **Machine**. Players obtain their own **Calling Cards** online and can download and print their own physical cards. Every **Calling Card** has its own **ID#** which is shared by the **Gear** it represents.

Once out in the world, a **Calling Card's ID#** can be found by other potential players and used to get into the game. Passersby who find a **Calling Card** can enter its **ID#** on the web site to do two things:

1. Add power to the virtual **Gear** that **Calling Card** represents.
2. Obtain their **own Calling Card** with an **ID#** that is a "child" of the **ID#** they entered.
 - This allows the player to add onto and become a part of the **Machine**.

Gear Placement Logic

What Gears Mean

Machines are shared entities, built through a community effort. **Gears** are the building blocks of **Machines**. They must fit together in order for the **Machine** to run. Every **Gear** represents a **good deed**, and so players are building **Machines** through their goodness. The structure of the **Machine** and how the **Gears** actually fit together is intended to depict as a visualization the interconnected kindness of the players. By examining a **Machine**, players can see how their actions relate to the actions of others.

Calling Cards

Whenever a player signs up for *kindworks*, s/he obtains a **Calling Card**, which is a printable image that is viewable from the "View My Cards" page of the Web site. Every **Calling Card** is identified by a unique, randomly-generated **ID#**.

"Parent" and "Child" Calling Cards

If the player found a posted **Calling Card** in the world and entered its **ID#** when s/he signed up, the **Calling Card** s/he receives upon starting is linked to the **Calling Card** whose **ID#** was entered. In other words, the **Calling Card** the player starts out with is a "child" of the "parent" **Calling Card** that was found. This distinction affects how **Gears** are placed within a given **Machine**.

From Calling Card to Gear

Calling Cards are essentially the "blueprints" of **Gears**. By themselves, **Calling Cards** cannot power a **Machine**, but by activating them, they become **Gears**. When a player decides to print out and post a **Calling Card**, s/he activates it by selecting the "Print" option on the "View Card Details" page and then entering its **ID#**. By doing this, a **Gear** is placed in the **Machine** that player is involved with.

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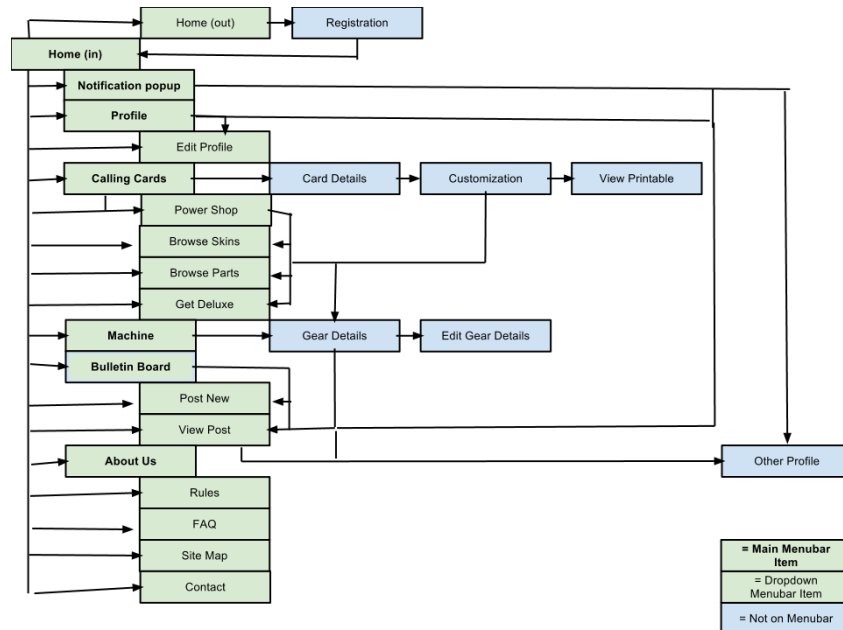
Entering the Game

Players can enter the game in two ways:

1. By finding a *kindworks* **Calling Card** and signing up for an account

Powering Gears

When first placed into a **Machine**, a **Gear** has no **Power** because no one has found it yet. A **Gear's Power** equates to the number of times someone has entered its **ID#** by finding its corresponding **Calling Card**. The **Power** of a **Gear** is represented by a number in its center equating to the amount of **ID#** entries. At first the newly placed **Gear** will display the number 0, and it will be displayed in the **Machine** as translucent and dimly shaded. Once someone





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What's Next?

The team is scheduled to present their work to this point at Monday afternoon's Halves Presentations, so efforts at the tail end of this week have been directed towards preparation. The weekend will also be used for further rehearsal.

Once presentations are complete, the focus will return fully to production. It will be key that technical challenges be resolved and the programming completed in the next couple of weeks so that a functional Web site exists to support playtesting initiatives. Currently, the database has been set up, but the FTPS server is not compatible with the Joomla framework, so we are in the process of switching to an FTP system. Thanks to the assistance of Steve and Jon, as well as all of Terry's work, this issue is being addressed as quickly as possible. The completed Site Map and Web art assets will prove instrumental in being able to develop the Web site swiftly.

Looking ahead, the team has a playtest planned with the CMU buggy event on April 20, and also will be able to test with the Boy Scouts of America via the client's connections to the organization. The testing will give the team an idea of how players utilize the Web site features and whether the Calling Card mechanic is effective in drawing people to the experience. Based on findings, the features, content, and card aesthetic will likely be tweaked.



It should be an exciting road to the finish line, and the team is gearing up for a rapid production pace over the coming weeks. Feedback from Halves also will aid greatly in the team's second-half progress. Thank you for reading, and expect another update at the end of this week!