Lecture 9: Exploring MUD

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What is MUD?

- Multi-User Dungeons/Dimension/Domain (MUD) is a multi-player computer game on the Internet.
- A place where hundreds or even thousands of online users go to interact on fantasy worlds, where monsters, thieves, wizards and warriors roam in search of wealth, experience and friendship.
- Each MUD is a virtual universe run by a complex server program which manages a local world in response to the words and actions of human and automated visitors.
MUD History

- Major milestones in the development of MUD's are described below: (Bartle 1990)
  - Adventure. The first widely used computer adventure game was created in 1973 by Will Crowther.
  - Zork. Inspired by the game Adventure, Dave Lebling, Marc Blank, Tim Anderson, and Bruce Daniels, a group of students at MIT, in the summer of 1977.
  - MUD. The first Multi-User Dungeon was usually just called MUD, and was written in 1978 by Roy Trubshaw, a student at Essex University in England.
  - Tiny MUD. Jim Aspnes, a graduate student at Carnegie Mellon University, wrote the first TinyMUD in one weekend in 1989.
  - MOO (MUD Object-Oriented). The concept of a MOO was introduced by Pavel Curtis in 1996, extending the concept of a configurable MUD with a built-in object-oriented language.
Text-based and Graphical MUD

- **Text-based MUD:** Typically running on a BBS or Internet server, the game is usually text driven, where players read descriptions of rooms, objects, events, other characters, and computer-controlled creatures in a virtual world. Players usually interact with each other and the surroundings by typing commands.

- **A graphical MUD** is a MUD that uses computer graphics to represent parts of the virtual world and its visitors. Graphical MUDs require players to download a special client and the game's artwork. They range from simply enhancing the user interface to simulating 3D worlds with visual spatial relationships and customized avatar appearances.
How MUD Works?

• Client/Server Architecture
• Client: more and more MUD clients are providing multimedia enhancements, including sounds, text-to-speech, icons, alerts, and other features.
• Server:
  – Each MUD world is run by a MUD server hosted somewhere on the Internet.
  – Database
MUD Types

• While there are hundreds of different MUD's, there are two general types with very different styles:
  – Combat. These MUD's focus on combat and competition, and include LPMUD's, DikuMUD's, and their descendants.
  – Social. These MUD's focus on social interaction, and include TinyMUD's and their descendants.
MUD Commands

• Most MUD's share a common subset of commands, although different types also have different subsets of commands. Most MUD's share some basic commands, including the following:
  – go
  – help
  – look at <any object>
  – open
  – quit
  – say <something>
  – tell <user>
  – whisper <user>
MUD Client Applications

• You can connect to most MUD's over the Internet with a simple Telnet program.
• There are a range of specialized MUD client applications that solve the interface problems with Telnet.
• The following resources provide access to MUD client applications.
  – Google MUD Clients
  – Yahoo MUD Clients
How to find a MUD?

- The following web sites provide lists of currently operational MUD's:
  - Yahoo - MUD's MUSHes MOOs
  - The Almost-Complete List of MUSHes (1996)
  - The Mud Connector
  - SMAUG MUDS.
Key Features of MUD

- **Virtual space.** MUD's constitute a completely virtual space, but one that exists almost entirely in each user's mind.

- **Extensibility** is one of the most powerful features of MUD's. Some sophisticated MUD's even include a built-in programming language and object oriented properties like inheritance to enable very powerful additions and changes.
Specific Issues of MUD

• Confidentiality
• Harassment
• Psychological problem of identity for today's youths