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WEBWORTHY

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Book Reviews from page 57

the player into a graphically beautiful world in which s/he can be anyone, amass power, glory and wealth and interact (either friendly or violently) with other people who are doing the same.

In countless interviews with players, **Kelly 2** explores the social, economic and political relationships that evolve in these games. In any given game, online players can be from all over the (real) world. Within the context of the game, players band together for mutual defense and converse in the abbreviated keyboard slang that is common to games (and found in instant messaging and email). Conversation begun on in-game topics (i.e., cooperating to kill that big monster that is about to make mincemeat of our party) often evolves into other topics as players discover mutual interests or simply ask for help. **Kelly 2** gives the example of meeting up with a party in the game that consisted of a French girl, an Englishman, some Germans and a couple of guys from Denmark. After this party helped him dispatch a particularly nasty creature that was attacking him, the French girl announced that she was up against a tough English test soon and wondered if anyone could help her with it online. She received that help.

Of course, as **Kelly 2** points out, MMORPGs are not all cooperation and happiness. On the contrary, the worlds are filled with virtual violence, destruction, killing, and deceit. It is, at times, a free-for-all to be sure. The interesting thing is that the vast number of players involved in any one game world tend to evolve into self-regulating societies (though still usually somewhat cut-throat), complete with moral codes of conducts, dynamic economy and trade, and political and social institutions. In fact, the economy of one such game world has been found to be the 77th largest economy in the world — somewhere between Russian and Bulgaria. And this is not simply virtual currency. Some hard core gamers actually make a fine living by accruing objects of wealth in the game world and then literally selling them for American dollars to other players on sites like eBay.

This book would be a valuable title for any public or academic library. Though it would complement teen and young adult collections, it would also benefit adults and researchers interested in the details of this multi-billion dollar industry and the incredible impact these games are having socially, politically and economically (not to mention how it is changing the way people learn and think). *Massively Multiplayer Online Role-*

Playing Games is a solid introduction to the on-goings of the **MMORPG** world, the psychology of players and their evolving social and political interactions, the production of **MMORPGs**, and their possible future. The book contains an appendix of online addiction organizations and **MMORPG** information sites. It has an index and a good starting bibliography, although a bit heavy on fiction books like *The Three Musketeers*, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, and *Werhunter*. While the afore-mentioned titles may be of great background interest to those who actually play the games, other nonfiction titles such as *Got Game* and *Digital Game Based Learning* (unfortunately not included in the bibliography) offer fantastic explanations and illustrations of what games have actually done to transform our society.

Kelly 2 quotes Sean O'Faolain with writing, "There is only one admirable form of the imagination: the imagination that is so intense that it creates a new reality..." Online gaming is (so far) the most ultimate form of new reality and needs to be understood as the massive societal-changing force that it is. Gaming is literally creating a new reality, and thus changing the perception of the current one. 🍄

Rumors from page 48

and is doing well. It's enough to inspire us all!

Have you seen *Investigators Guide to Steganography* by **Gregory Kipper**? (Auerbach Publications, 2004). Hmm... What is steganography? A form of hidden communication.

You know, it's just plain exciting to get all these holiday greeting cards at his time of year. For example, I just got one from my long-time friend, **Bob Miranda**, who I will always associate with **Asti's** the opera restaurant in New York (he hosted a dinner there for **LAPT**, the precursor to **LCATS**) and **Pergamon Press**. This year his card came from **Miranda Press**, an imprint of **Cognizant Communication Corporation**. Pretty amazing, the things that people get up to! In fact, curious, I decided to poke around on the Internet and look for **Miranda Press** and, lo and behold, what to my wondering eyes should appear but the **Cognizant Communications Website** with all sorts of in-

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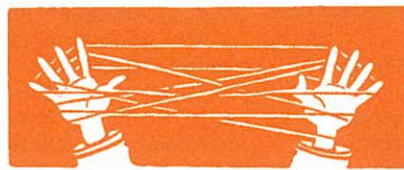
Column Editor: **Pamela M. Rose, M.L.S.** (Web Services & Library Promotion Coordinator, Health Sciences Library, University at Buffalo; Phone: 716-829-3900 x129; Fax: 716-829-2211) <pmrose@buffalo.edu> wings.buffalo.edu/~pmrose

Webworthy has reviewed 346 Websites to date! Are you reading this intro? If so, we'd like to know if you find this column useful! Email the editor at <pmrose@buffalo.edu> with your comments and any suggestions for improvement!

Websites are chosen for uniqueness, depth of information, functionality and ease of access. Sites are organized by broad subject area and are visited just prior to publication. Please let the editor know of any broken links. Comments and suggestions welcome! Pamela M. Rose, <pmrose@buffalo.edu>, Health Sciences Library, University at Buffalo, 3435 Main St., Buffalo, NY 14214-3002; 716-829-3900 x129. Unless otherwise noted, Internet sites were also reviewed in Science's NetWatch column. — PR

Evolutionary Genetics

British geneticist and mathematician **R.A. Fisher's** (1890-1962) achievements, including seven books, several hundred papers, and scientific correspondence with its thought-provoking content and ideas for further development, are attracting increasing attention for their far-reaching consequences. The **R. A. Fisher Digital Archive** from the Uni-



versity of Adelaide Library in Australia now allows readers to browse more than 170 of **Fisher's** complex and eclectic work, which probe questions such as the origin of dominant genes and the inheritance of the Rh blood groups. Follow along **Fisher's** correspondence as he discusses heredity, natural selection, and other topics with thinkers such as **Charles Darwin's** son **Leonard**, a soldier and scientist. **Fisher's** papers also reveal what **Stephen Jay Gould** called one of his "major-league errors," his campaign to discredit the link between smoking and lung cancer. — <http://www.library.adelaide.edu.au/digitised/fisher>

Taxonomy

535,000 down, 1.24 million to go! With an ambitious agenda of creating a validated checklist of all the world's species (plants, animals, fungi and microbes) using consistent taxonomy by 2011, **Species 2000** is well on its way. Bringing together an array of global species databases covering each of the major groups of organisms, the "federation," in partnership with the **Integrated Taxonomic Information system (ITIS)** of North America, currently produces the **Catalogue of Life** — an Annual Checklist available on the **Species 2000 Website** and by CD ROM. — <http://www.sp2000.org> 🍄