The Watson Letters

1997 — 2013

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Introduction

Richard A. Watson
Posted: Tue Jan 02, 2007 6:13 pm   Post subject:

vidkid7 wrote:

> *Gah, I'm so confused. For years, I thought that Dr. Watson and RAWA were the same person... but various people (including Rand at Mysterium) have told me that they're actually two different people.*

The confusion between me and Dr. Watson is understandable. There are many similarities between the two of us.

- We have the same name, but Cyan is full of coincidences like that. Out of the roughly 100 people who have worked here at some point in the 14 years I've been here, we've had 2 Bills, 2 "Bret"s (Bret/Brett), 2 "Brian"s (Brian/Bryan), 2 "Brice"s (Brice/Bryce), 4 Chrises, 8 Erics, 2 Jasons, 3 Jeffs, 2 Johns, 2 Karls, 5 Marks, 4 Mike/Michaels, 2 Nate/Nathans, 2 Pauls, 2 (or 3) Richards (depending on the outcome of this debate), 2 Robs , 2 "Robin"s (Robyn/Robin), 4 Ryans, 2 Steves (3, if you want to count "Stephan" as the French version of "Steve"), 2 Terrys, 3 Tims, 2 Tonys, and 2 Victorias.)

Sure, first _and_ last name being the same is less common, but we have that, too (2 Eric Andersons).

- We have the same birthdays, though Dr. Watson is ten years older than I am. That isn't unheard of here at Cyan either - Rand and Ryan Miller have the same birthday, but they are fifteen years apart.

- Dr. Watson and I look very similar: overweight, bald, glasses, beard.

However, there are differences between the two of us.

- Being ten years older, Dr. Watson's hair is a little grayer, though I'm catching up faster than I'd like (let's just blame the stress of the last two years, shall we?).

Introduction

- Dr. Watson prefers his beard very short, while I usually keep my beard quite a bit longer (see the original "Making of Myst" video, or 5 of the 6 picts of me here).

- The sounds of our voices are very different. I think the recording of Dr. Watson in the Kirel Community Room ("To D'ni" expansion) sounds remarkably similar to "Charles Emerson Winchester the Third" from M*A*S*H, while I have a high, squeaky voice not fit for recording (as one of "The Cavern Today" podcasts from last summer clearly demonstrates).

- Dr. Watson has a doctorate in archaeology; I do not.

BrettM wrote:

Has RAWA ever been down in his own right as a Cyantist? Or has only "Dr. Watson" ever been seen?

Back in Feb. 2006, when someone wrote asking about Dr. Watson, I wrote:

Quote:

If I see him, I will pass that on. Unfortunately, no one has seen Dr. Watson in nearly two years, so I wouldn't expect to see him in the Cavern anytime soon.

(To make the IC/OOC thing even more confusing, I have been in "Until Uru" occasionally as "Rich" over the last two years. In order to keep the confusion to a minimum, I won't be coming on the D'mala shard under any of the Rich/RAWA/etc. variants (though I hold out hope that Dr. Watson may return someday). That doesn't, however, mean I'm not there under other guises. 🙂

Now that I re-read it, I see that I only made a commitment to try to keep the confusion on D'mala to a minimum, so I'm free to cause as much confusion as I want in Live. 😃

Seriously, though, Dr. Watson has been missing for almost three years now. I still do not expect that to change anytime soon. And since there are already several threads of people expecting Dr. Watson to return to the Cavern, it's probably best to not confuse the issue further by having Rich or RAWA show up.

That still doesn't mean that I'm not there under other guises.

😃

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

Richard A. Watson
Posted: Thu Jan 04, 2007 3:39 pm   Post subject:

Warning, thread derailment in progress...

BrettM wrote:

> *Either RAWA has too much time on his hands, allowing
> him to sit down and make an extensive and meticulous
> count of duplicate names for this post, or somebody
> at Cyan is maintaining such a list on a rolling
> basis as a bizarre kind of hobby. I think I am
> boggled either way.* 😃

"Bizarre hobby" is my middle name. Wait. No, it isn't.
Maybe it should be.

It started innocently enough. When there were just two
Richards, I barely noticed, even though it was 2 people
out of 8, and I was one of them. After all, I was
usually referred to as "Rich" or "RAWA". And Richard
Vander Wende never went by "Rich" (or "RAWA", if you can
believe that).

Then there were two Marks. And then a Robin to join
Robyn. And then two Tonys, and then two Michaels, and
then two Erics. All in a company with under 30 people,
I figured something was up.

So even before we got to 5 Marks and 4 Erics working
simultaneously in a company with roughly 50 people
(even ignoring other duplicates for the moment), I
began joking that Cyan was starting a policy of only
hiring people if someone else at the company already
had that name.

And when a fifth simultaneous "Eric" to come on board
was another "Eric Anderson", and Cyan had apparently
moved up to wanting both first and last name to match,
that was too much for my coincidence meter to handle.

Of course, it turned out to be a simple coincidence,
and not some massive conspiracy, after all. Or at least
that's what Rand keeps assuring me.

Nonetheless, I've been keeping track of duplicate names
while continuing to wait for my coincidence meter
replacement.

JohnLynch wrote:

> *Can you clarify if Dr. Watson did go back to Cyan after the DRC left D'ni? Or has this been retconned out?*

It's a shame to have to admit it, but I did not recall the interview that Dr. Watson had given Tweek until it was mentioned in this thread, so if you'd have asked me that last week, you'd have gotten a different answer. Apparently, the answer is "Yes. He returned to Cyan for a couple of months." You'd think I'd remember something like that.

Beefo la Rue wrote:

> *It is very confusing for us, but not for him.*

There was a time when that was true, back when the differences between Dr. Watson and me were minimal at most. I had a pretty good handle on the whole situation. But ever since he disappeared and I did not, things have gotten a whole lot shakier.

All the more reason to hope that Dr. Watson returns safely someday. Or to plead for the contributions to the RAWA therapy jars to be increased. Or both.

Yeah... probably both.

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

Richard A. Watson
Posted: Sun Nov 08, 2009 11:44 am — Post subject:

Thanks for the welcome!

It's nice to see many familiar names still sticking with us. I see some names I don't recognize, so I'll attempt to introduce myself a bit.

My name is Richard A. Watson, though many know me simply as "RAWA" for reasons that have been lost in the mists (no pun intended) of time. [Ok, they haven't been lost, but they really aren't the least bit interesting or related to Cyan, so let's just pretend that they have, shall we?]

I started working at Cyan in September 1992 and worked on the original Myst for Macintosh. I was the one playing Prince of Persia in the "Making of Myst" movie that came with the game. When I started, it was to be Rand's programming assistant, as he had done all of Cyan's programming alone to that point. He and I worked in a small addition on the back of his double-wide mobile home, often interrupted by one of his three daughters who were homeschooled at the time. Most of

the other employees worked from their own homes back then, too.

I have worn many, many hats at Cyan over the years - pretty much whatever Cyan needed me to do. Entering registration card data for the Manhole and Osmo and Spelunx, answering the tech support phone calls for the Manhole, Osmo and Spelunx, then I moved up to lead (i.e. only) programmer on The Manhole Masterpiece Edition (until Mark did the port to the PC), an update to Cosmic Osmo, and the colorization of Spelunx.

Then Riven design began, and I added a Game Design hat to my growing collection. I also appointed myself Continuity Guy, though I didn't have any real power, and D'ni Language Guy, the combination of which gradually evolved into my role as "D'ni Historian", which still didn't have much power, but had a much cooler title.

I've even been something of a "community manager" before, though it didn't have any title at all, then. I answered almost all of Cyan's snail mail and eventually email as that became more and more common during Riven production, which eventually led to spending a great deal of time contributing to the RivenLyst mailing list and hanging out in Cyan Chat during lunches and after work along with Mark DeForest.

Oh, Rudolfson asked about the little four pixel high "RAWA" in Riven. That was another of those unofficial hats I put on myself. It started in Myst. The little plaque for the wind icon in Selenitic was changed slightly as it originally looked too much like a water fountain icon, so the curls on the end were curled more. In one view, the plaque still had the fountain look. I'd never really used Photoshop before, but I added the extra curls to match the other views and hid a little, four pixel high "RAWA" to the screen I had touched up. [So, I guess I had already appointed myself as "Continuity Guy" back in Myst.] Unfortunately, I didn't quite understand the process – that Broderbund (our publisher who did the port to the PC) was re-dithering their own versions of the assets from the 24-bit pictures for the PC version, so my edits to our 8-bit pictures only showed up in the Macintosh version.

When Riven came along, I did the same thing. Several shots with multiple states had tiny differences between them – the weeds or rocks would shift slightly on the ground, for instance. Now while assembling Riven in the development stack, I could go directly from one state to the other while staying on the same screen, so I was

the best one to spot those minor differences. The players would likely never notice, as they'd have to leave the area to manipulate something in order to change the states in question, but I didn't like those differences anyway. Rather than telling an artist about it, I just touched them up so that they matched and hid my little "RAWA"s on the stills in question.

One of those RAWAs is used in activating the Riven Easter Eggs, but there are several others...

Where was I? Oh, yeah, there have been many other hats over the years, but this "little" introduction is already quite long enough.

And now, seventeen years later, we've come full circle. I've been working out of my double wide mobile home for the last year or so, much of that time spent working on reformatting those same Myst assets for the iPhone, often interrupted by one of my five sons, four of which are homeschooled, the fifth just six months old. Oh, and earlier this year, since the iPhone version went back to the original 24-bit assets, I touched up that same Selenitic shot of the wind plaque and added my four pixel high "RAWA" to it once again.

There's probably some deeper meaning there, if only I were smart enough to find it.

😬

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

Linking and the Art of Writing

Assorted Ramblings

From: Richard A. Watson
To: Riven Spoiler Lyst
Subject: **Assorted ramblings... Very Long...**
Date: Wednesday, June 21, 2000

- - - WARNING - - -

This disgustingly long letter has taken me three days
to write, as I've had time here and there to work on it,
so it may be a little disjointed in places. Hopefully
it'll still be coherent enough to be understood. 😃

- - - - - - - - - - -

There's been a lot of confusing/conflicting viewpoints
on what happened to Sirrus and Achenar at the end of
Myst.

I've been too busy to answer these as they come up
individually, so I'm trying to address them all in one
more general email. I still have over 200 unread lyst
emails, so I may not address all the questions raised
in these threads, but I'll probably hit many of them.

I want to start by pointing out that Myst/Riven are
Cyan's attempt at recreating some of the events in the
life of Atrus in a semi-non-linear medium (i.e. a game).
Since it's a game where the player can do things that
didn't happen in the account of Atrus' life, we've got
to take some artistic license with his story - like the
"losing" endings of Myst and Riven.

When making the games, we have to carefully pare
everything down to the basic elements needed to play
the game, leaving out almost anything that isn't
required for gameplay. Myst Island, for example was
made much smaller, and only the buildings/places
relevant to playing Myst were included. Atrus
definitely had other "places of protection" for his
Books other than the ones shown in Myst. We throw in as
many "extras" as we have time for, but for the most
part, there isn't much time for things that aren't
specifically needed for a playable game.

So the most accurate answer for many of these kinds of issues (e.g. "Why do the remaining Books coincidentally happen to be the Books with 'places of protection'?) is simply "artistic license". If we didn't have hardware limitations, storage capacity limitations, time limitations, money limitations, etc. and if we had a billion monkeys working on a billion computers for a billion years, we could make the Ages more complete, which would be cool from an exploration point of view, but wouldn't make the games themselves any more playable. In fact with all the "non-game related" things thrown in, there would be a lot more "red herrings" and people would be even more confused when they write to me. 😃 (If I had a nickel for everyone who wrote to me asking what one of the few "extra" items in Myst did...)

The upshot of my ramblings so far is that there is a distinction between "The Complete Story of Atrus" (i.e. the D'ni historical accounts), and what we were able to portray in Myst/Riven. The problem is that you (the players) don't have direct access to "The Complete Story of Atrus". Unfortunately, this means that people often are forced to look to Myst itself to answer questions it wasn't intended to answer. Its purpose was not to be a course in D'ni history, it was designed to be game based on Atrus' life story.

"So what?!?!" I hear someone yelling in the back there. So... this means that there are different "correct" answers to many questions depending on if you're interested in the "real" answer (based on the background story not accessible to most people), or the "Myst" answer (based on the info available in the game). Sometimes the answers are the same. Sometimes they are different.

This wouldn't be a big problem if we stopped making D'ni related games. We'd just let you live with the "Myst" answer, in most cases you'd never know it wasn't right so you wouldn't even know to be unhappy with it, and the "real" answer wouldn't matter. Those who do think things through enough to be stumped with what they come up with may be bothered enough to try to get the "real" answer from me, which happened often enough for this Sirrus/Achenar question to be listed on the FAQ.

But as we make more of that background information available (hmmm, Mudpie, anyone?), the people out there who scrutinize these kinds of details are going to point to my "official" answers and say "Hey, that

contradicts paragraph 3 of page 5 of blah, blah, blah"
So, I've made a conscious effort in the past to answer
questions in a way that applies to both the "real"
answer and the "game" answer as much as possible, and
basically avoiding questions where the two answers
blatantly contradict one another.

I've also avoided these topics because the answers just
lead to a lot more questions... 😃

If anyone's made it this far... Here are my answers,
most of which have been on the FAQ for Myst for years
(in case you just think I'm making them up off the top
of my head right now.) 😃

Q. What happened to the red and blue books at the end
of Myst?

A. Atrus tried to ensure that the boys would not be
able to escape the Ages they were in. In Myst this is
shown by the scorch marks where the Books used to be.
The historical accounts are not specific as to how he
ensured their captivity. Very little artistic license
taken here - burning the Books seems a very reasonable,
logical way of showing this.

Q. Does destroying the Book destroy the one occupying
it (aka Did Atrus kill his sons?)?

A1. (game answer) - Clearly, from the evidence given in
the game, the answer is no. Burning the Book, in
essence, isn't much different than tearing pages out of
it - either one "breaks" the Book. The boys were
obviously alive when the Books were missing pages. The
main difference is that a burned Book is more difficult
to put back together. 😃

A2. (historical answer) - The boys would be unaffected
by the destruction of the Books, except that it would
make it rather difficult for them ever to be rescued.

Q. Are they in some kind of void/suspended animation?

A1. (game answer) - From the evidence in the game, no.
They are aware of the passage of time. And since
they're still alive after all this time, they must have
access to food/water/air/etc.

A2. (historical answer) - They were in complete Ages
(and probably pretty nice ones, I would guess, if the
panels were to show an Age that people like the boys
would be so anxious to go to.) They just had no way out
of them.

Q. So why do we only see black when we're in the Book?

A1. (game answer) - Because it's night with a moonless, overcast sky, and you don't have any firemarbles/flashlights/candles (you should have brought the matches from the safe in the cabin! ... 😊

A2. (real answer) - We didn't like the idea of "rewarding" the player for setting one of the brothers free with another Age to see/explore.

Q. If the red and blue Books were ordinary Linking Books but leading to "Prison Ages", why do you switch places with the brothers when the Book is complete?

A. A whole boatload of Artistic License. Completing the book is the player's way of saying "I want to free this brother." And we simplified that to its most basic elements—you're stuck in the Prison Age; he's out.

You want the complicated, more historically accurate way to free a brother?

1) Complete the book so you can go to the Age he's trapped in

2) You'll have to find a spare Myst Linking Book somewhere or neither of you are coming back. This complicates the interface, and changes the game if you can carry a Myst Linking Book around with you the whole game that you can use at any time.

3) Either

   a) Go to the prison Age without a Linking Book - the brother and you are trapped together forever, or as long as the brother lets you live (how long do you think that will be?)

      or

   b) Bring a Linking Book. The brother bops you on the head and links out, damaging the Book in the process so you can't follow him.

4) You're stuck in the Prison Age; he's out. We've had to do a lot more filming, modeling, rendering, changing the interface, etc. to essentially get the same ending as Myst already shows.

Don't worry, we'll fix it in "ultimateMYST: the 'See Sirrus and Achenar's Prison Ages' Edition". (Settle down, it's just a joke. 😊)

Now that those of you who've thought they had things all figured out to the smallest detail have had the rug yanked out from under them... go think about the

implications of this information for a while. The dominoes are going to start falling, and you may be in for a few "aha!" experiences. 😬

Once you think you have a handle on this new info, and you've come up with all your questions, and thought about what the answers might be, come back and finish reading this email.

I'll try to answer a few of the biggest issues that this will probably raise.

(That means stop reading now – maybe even for a couple of days, if you're like me and like to come to these conclusions on your own and you'll be disappointed by my just blurting them out...)

If you're not interested in doing that, continue... 😬

Q. That means that the method used to trap Gehn wouldn't have worked as shown in Riven (using the Book to trick him to use the Book and set you free)?

A. You catch on quick! We were willing to sacrifice D'ni historical accuracy for a playable, immersive game with Riven, just as we did with Myst. In the D'ni historical accounts, the person helping Atrus had to use his/her wits in a different way to get Gehn to use the Prison Book. But simulating this was not an option with Myst/Riven's intentionally intuitive, minimal, immersive interface (i.e. no dialog boxes, no "pick which one of these three preset phrases" conversation trees, etc.). Your end of any conversations had to be implied or determined by where/when you clicked the mouse button. We took advantage of the one-in-one-out concept implied in Myst to keep the interface simple while being clear to all who played Myst (since 95% of them don't care enough about the nit picky details of the back story to see the problem anyway.)

Q. So if all this is true, then Sirrus and Achenar are only trapped in their Books because they didn't take a Linking Book to Myst (or another Age) with them?

A. Right again. They were not in the habit of carrying their own Linking Books. Every Age they had ever visited always already had a Linking Book back to Myst.

Q. But Gehn _was_ in the habit of carrying a return Linking Book.

A. Yes, he was.

Q. So he never was really trapped?

A. According to the D'ni historical accounts, yes, he was trapped.

Q. How was he trapped, then?

A. I think you've got enough info to work this one out on your own...

<RAWA removes his "blatant Spoiler" hat and burns it, returning to his usual uninformative, unhelpful self.> 😬

Shorah,

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

How Long?

From: Richard A. Watson
Subject: **Re: How Long?**
Date: Thursday, November 01, 2001

Tom wrote:

> *I've always wondered how long Atrus, (and subsequently Sirrus and Achenar) was trapped on K'veer?*

There are several answers to this question depending on how you define "trapped in K'veer" (total time from when Gehn locked him in as a teenager until he broke back out in the Book of D'ni, the amount of time he was trapped after the boys tricked him to going there, etc.), but...

> *I guess the only real reason I'm asking this is because I'm curious to figure out how long Atrus Myst book was falling in that "Starry Expanse" before we the players came upon it. I'm thinking it fell for quite some time.*

...knowing the answer to the first question doesn't provide any relevant information for the second question either way.

It may seem from the intro to Myst that the Book was falling for a long time, since as soon as it lands you're allowed to pick it up, but the intro to Myst is artistic, not literal. You (the player) don't actually see the Book land any more than you actually hear Atrus' monologue or see the names in the stars 🙂.

It's just a behind the scenes look at where the Book came from, a hint that there's a whole lot more to this story than you ever find out in Myst alone, and a foreshadowing to something that will happen much later (i.e. the ending of Riven). From the intro of Myst, there isn't enough information to know how long the Book fell. It could have only fallen for a few minutes, a few hours, a few days, a few weeks, a few years, etc.

However, since we know the player eventually safely takes that same path later on, it's reasonably safe to assume that the Book probably fell for only a few hours at most, and may have lain undiscovered for decades until someone finally stumbled on it.

😀

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

1997 Miscellany

From: Richard A. Watson
To: The Riven Lyst
Subject: **Re: Ages: created or bridged?**
Date: Wednesday, September 17, 1997

> *I have a question about some of Atrus's observations in BoA. Gehn tells him that the books actually create the ages, thus giving Gehn the excuse to act like a GOD once he gets there. And why not? If he actually did create the world, then this is a GOD-like act... (even if this would be considered breaking rule #1 of the D'ni Guild writers).*

> *BUT, Atrus comes to the conclusion that the books don't create the Ages; they act as a bridge to an infinite number of pre-existing worlds--and I believe that in BoT, this idea is the one they support as well....*

The D'ni histories indicate that the D'ni did not believe that they were creating the Ages they linked to. They seemed to understand that the Ages already existed, and that they were merely creating the _links_to these Ages. This is Atrus' view as well.

Gehn, on the other hand, wants to control the Ages he has made, and uses the power of the Books to intimidate the inhabitants of those worlds. He believes he has the

power to create, and therefore the right to do what he wishes with the Ages (and the inhabitants).

So, my question is this: if Atrus is right, then how is it possible for Catherine and Anna to rewrite Riven while Gehn and Atrus are there and then all the changes they wrote alters the Age?

This is the most complicated and confusing aspect of The Art.

In order to gain a deeper knowledge of the workings of the Books, we'll need a working knowledge of quantum mechanics.

!! WARNING !! – GREAT, BIG, HEAVY, COMPLICATED EXPLANATION – !! WARNING !!

Many of the interpretations of quantum theory say that until a state of matter is observed, it exists in many states simultaneously – it creates a bizarre "probability wave" that contains all of the possible states of that matter. Therefore, as was proposed in Schrodinger's famous cat analogy, bizarre things happen on the quantum level that allow things like Schrodinger's cat to be both alive and dead at the same time, until one of the states is observed, locking it in a single state, and collapsing the "probability wave."

What the D'ni seem to have concluded (proved?), is that those waves don't actually cease to exist altogether, instead each possibility continues to exist in an alternate quantum reality (read "parallel universe"), until a state is observed in that quantum reality, and the possibilities not observed in that quantum reality continue to exist in still another, and so on ad infinitum. This makes the universe infinitely complex, with every possible quantum combination since the creation of the universe existing in a quantum reality somewhere (even the "unstable Ages"). The Books somehow allow observation of (thus the locking of) and travel to those quantum realities.

So, you can make "unobserved" changes (probabilities that haven't been locked down by description in the Book, or by physical observation in the Age itself) without forcing the Book to link to a new quantum reality.

This is why being careful of contradictions is so important. The problem with contradictions is that the Book attempts to link to a quantum reality that matches a contradictory description, and the closest thing it can find is usually fairly unstable.

I could write for days and still not do this subject justice, but that's the best I can do right now. Hope it helps explain it a bit.

Oh, and I see that hand in the back.

"What about the changes to Riven? You still haven't answered that."

The changes made to Riven near the end of the Book of Atrus (pg 268 in the hardcover edition), were a collaboration between Anna and Catherine. Anna's main contribution was probably keeping the Book free of contradictions. Catherine's intuitive (but D'ni rule-breaking) style was so bizarre that earlier Atrus had claimed that her Books wouldn't even work - yet they did.

The daggers which mysteriously appeared around the island, and the lava filled fissures were made possible by her odd style - which I cannot explain. And although Catherine and Anna intended for the lava filled fissures as part of their plan to rescue Atrus while still leaving Gehn trapped in his Fifth Age, the Star Filled Fissure was not intentional or anticipated.

To me, it remains the most mysterious object in all the D'ni histories.

Shorah,

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

[If you're interested in further study of quantum physics, my two favorite books on the subject are: "In Search of Schrodinger's Cat" by John Bribbin, and "Quantum Physics" by Nick Herbert.]

From: Richard A. Watson
To: Riven Lyst
Subject: **Re: BoA and Linking**
Date: Thursday, November 13, 1997

> *I was reading BoD the other night and something finally made sense to me.*
>
> *When you link, you can link to any place at ANY TIME. In BoA, Atrus linked back to a time before they were ever there.*

Sorry to add to the confusion, but linking to an earlier time doesn't explain the situation in the Book

of Atrus. Atrus actually linked to a completely separate, albeit remarkably similar, Age.

Gehn's removal of the phrases in the Age 37 Descriptive Book forced the Book to choose another Age which still fit the description. The Ages were very similar, but distinct.

Making changes and additions to a Book once you've linked there is _extremely_ dangerous, and great care must be taken. [If discussions of quantum mechanics give you a headache, skip the rest of this paragraph.] If you try to make changes whose probability waveforms have already collapsed due to conscious observation, or blatantly contradict something written elsewhere in the Book, the best you can hope for is that the book will create a link to a different, but similar Age. At worst, it will create a link to something totally bizarre, possibly unviable, probably unstable; or the book will cease to function completely.

From what we know of D'ni history, it was standard for D'ni writers to complete their works before ever linking to them. Once the Age was written, the maintainers would inspect the book's description, and travel there, then approve the book. No changes to the book were generally allowed after it had been stamped by the maintainers.

Gehn, however, was basically teaching himself to write, using trial and error, taking phrases from various Books he found. This is the main reason that the Ages his Books link to are so unstable.

Atrus also altered Books after linking at various times, while learning the Art, but he was more careful when doing so. He is especially careful with changes that he's making in the Riven Descriptive Book, because there's a lot more at stake.

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

From: Richard A. Watson
To: The Riven Lyst
Subject: **Re: More linking issues**
Date: Friday, November 14, 1997

Fan A wrote:

> *What happens if two linking books are written identically? (by the same writer, by different writers -- at the same time, at different times)*

Fan B wrote:

> *I suspect that two writers, not in contact, accidentally writing the same series of characters into their Descriptive Books, would get different ages, superficially similar, but with difference - Atrus is always commenting, in his journals, about how much he finds that he didn't write.*

Even if the same writer wrote the exact same thing in two different Descriptive Books, the chances of the Descriptive Books linking to the same Age are so extremely remote that it's considered impossible to write two Descriptive Books to the same Age. In the "infinity" of the "Tree of Possibilities" there are countless worlds to match any description you can write. There is a chaotic element in how the Book selects which of those many worlds it will link to, which even the D'ni never were able to compensate for.

There are documented theories that this chaotic element is due to the fact that no two Descriptive Books are exactly alike, and that these differences influence the initial Link. Experiments were attempted to produce identical Books, but the experiments were never successful, so this theory remains unproven.

Fan B wrote:

> *I think that the writer's mind changes the age - A different person could write the same words, and have them mean different things. Note however that a slavish imitation would not be the same process of 'creation', but imitation, and so the mind of the writer would not elaborate on the details put down by his/her pen. (I realize this is an enormous body of speculation, but it explains a lot of stuff for me - the mental process of creation seems as important, or more important than the physical writing.)*

The D'ni histories seem to make it clear that this was part of the skill of the Art, learning how to put exactly what you wanted into very specific words. The Books cannot "read your intent".

Fan A wrote:

> *Also, in a prior post I asked how you can alter a age by adjusting its text... and I understand that nothing (time/space wise) matters as long as the text matches the age, but what if something significantly changes the age suddenly? Since the age no longer matched the text, would the link switch?*

Fan B wrote:

I have not read BoD, so I feel free to speculate. I think that if the age changed significantly enough, the text in the book would change (or perhaps merely fade?), the way the text in the book 'wrenches' changes in the world by the principle of similarity (a common magical principle). I think that this messing around with quantum physics is not addressing the problems straight on.

No, the text doesn't change, and no, the Link doesn't necessarily change just because the Age does. At least one example of this can be found in the Book of D'ni.

Fan B wrote:

For example, people must certainly have noticed the absence of large daggers sticking into Riven, or the absence of a huge starry fissure. However, with great skill, changes, real changes, not collapsing of superpositions, or shifting of the link to a neighboring age - changes can be made in an age by writing in it's Descriptive Book.

The daggers and the fissures were written by Catherine, whose unconventional writing style bends a number of D'ni writing rules. Atrus himself, when examining one of Catherine's works, didn't think the Book would work at all because of the way it was written (see the Book of Atrus).

Fan B wrote:

I think that this doesn't not violate the idea of linking, not creation, because the changes are (relatively) minor, and require a lot of skill/luck to implement successfully. For example, the Stoneship age was a partial failure on Atrus' part - it did not come out the way he wished, and Atrus is a skilled writer of Age.

Stoneship was one of Atrus' earliest Ages, written about a year after Gehn was trapped on Riven. He wasn't nearly as skilled a writer at this time, he was still experimenting - teaching himself how to write, learning what works, what doesn't. The failure of the Stoneship experiment taught Atrus why the D'ni rules did not permit the writing of manmade objects into an Age.

Shorah,

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

From: Richard A. Watson
To: The Riven Lyst
Subject: **Re: Riven Descriptive Book**
Date: Monday, November 24, 1997

> *I have a couple of questions,*
>
> *Say Gehn were to take the Riven Descriptive book to Riven through the process of writing a linking book to Riven then carrying the descriptive book with him. And he made changes to the Descriptive book while in Riven. Would these changes happen immediately or would he have to link using the Descriptive book for the changes to occur? Or if the Descriptive book linking panel was black as I've heard some people say, would he have to link to D'ni or wherever and then link back.*

No records have been found which describe experiments such as these, so any answer I would give is speculation at best.

On 11/13, I wrote something that relates to this:

> *From what we know of D'ni history, it was standard for D'ni writers to complete their works before ever linking to them. Once the Age was written, the maintainers would inspect the book's description, and travel there, then approve the book. No changes to the book were generally allowed after it had been stamped by the maintainers.*
>
> *Gehn, however, was basically teaching himself to write, using trial and error, taking phrases from various Books he found. This is the main reason that the Ages his Books link to are so unstable.*
>
> *Atrus also altered Books after linking at various times, while learning the Art, but he was more careful when doing so. He is especially careful with changes that he's making in the Riven Descriptive Book, because there's a lot more at stake.*

Because of the D'ni rules for not changing Books after the initial link, it doesn't surprise me that this topic isn't covered in any of the writings we've uncovered to date.

If you get your hands on any kortee'nea, and you want to conduct this experiment yourself, please feel free. But I wouldn't want to be the guinea pig for these tests. 😃

> *When a person links, how much is taken with them? I mean obviously it stops somewhere because the whole*

planet isn't taken with them. Do you understand what I mean?

Rule of thumb - anything that comes with you when you take a step comes with you when you link (with the exception of the Book you're using to Link).

If you're wearing a hat: It comes with you when you take a step. It also comes with you when you link.

If you're touching a table: It doesn't come with you when you take a step. It won't come with you when you link.

This basic rule of thumb answers most "can I take this?" questions pretty easily.

For the more silly, or bizarre, or complicated, I just don't know.

Hope that helps.

Shorah,

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

1998 Miscellany

From: Richard A. Watson
To: Riven Spoilers Lyst
Date: Friday, March 27, 1998

Jeff S. wrote:

Linking books cannot function with a page missing, correct?

Correct.

When a person links, the book remains, correct?

Correct.

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

From: Richard A. Watson
To: Riven Spoiler Lyst
Date: Monday, July 20, 1998

Could you link from Earth to Jupiter, if you just so happened to write a book that perfectly described

Jupiter? They're different planets, gazillions of miles apart. Is it a matter of light-years or is it something totally different, like parallel universes?

You could link to a planet very much like Jupiter, possibly even Jupiter in a parallel universe/Age/quantum reality. But you cannot link to a different place within the same Age/quantum reality/universe.

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

From: Richard A. Watson
To: Riven Spoiler Lyst
Date: Monday, July 20, 1998

My understanding, from the story, is that there was one MYST Descriptive Book. That Book was used to link TO Myst Island.

Yes, that Book was written by Catherine and Anna, and first used to link to Myst island. (After the initial link, it was customary to write Linking Books in the Age which from then on are used to link to the Age, and not use the Descriptive Book for linking thereafter. (FYI - Atrus doesn't have another Linking Book to Riven, so you do link through the Riven Descriptive Book at the beginning of Riven.))

That Book was LOST by Atrus when he fell into the fissure. It was LOST to the player of the MYST game when he/she linked to MYST (because the player, of course knew nothing of Writing and had on Linking Book to get back home).

No, Atrus lost a Myst Linking Book in the fissure, not the Descriptive Book for Myst:

pg 279 BoA

Turning to Atrus, Catherine freed her hand, then took the knapsack from her back and opened it.

"Here," she said, handing him a Book.

Atrus stared, dumbfounded. It was the Myst Book.

Catherine smiled then; opening the Linking Book, she placed her hand against it.

- - - -

Where did that book come from? In order for it to be a Linking Book which returns you to Myst Island from D'ni, it has to be a Linking Book written somewhere

> *on Myst and must contain phrases from the Book of D'ni! Right?*

No, a Linking Book to Myst only requires having been on Myst to write it. He needs no knowledge of the Book of D'ni. (And despite David Wingrove's* statements to the contrary, he doesn't even need knowledge of the Myst Book for that matter.)

*Editor's note: David Wingrove is co-author of the Myst books.

> *But Atrus does NOT have the Descriptive Book of D'ni, and so CANNOT write a Linking Book which takes him FROM D'ni to any other Age. To write a Linking Book, one must have the Descriptive Book for the Age you want to LEAVE via that Linking Book, and one must write that Linking Book from the Age/location one wants to link TO via that Linking Book.*

No. Linking Books are in no way connected to the Age you are leaving, only to the Age they were written in. You can write a Linking Book in Myst, then take it to any Age, and it will always lead back to Myst.

> *I suppose it is possible that one could COPY a Descriptive Book like MYST,*

This Copy would very likely not link to the same Myst Island. It would be a similar Age, but because of randomness in how the Descriptive Books initially link to their respective Ages, it is very unlikely to link to the same Age twice.

> *and then you would have two Descriptive Books which link to the same Age, but it is not recorded that Anna wrote two MYST Descriptive Books that were exact duplicates but I suppose she must have, and I suppose that one of those somehow got to D'ni where, later, a page was removed by Sirrus or Achenar and hidden on Myst island – and that appears to be a contradiction in itself? By removing a page from the book, how would Sirrus or Achenar get the page TO Myst Island to hide it?*

Here's the scenario:

Over the years, Atrus wrote many Linking Books back to the Library (the Linking Book you find at the beginning of Myst was written at the Dock, long before the Library was even built, which is why it's the only time you don't arrive in the Library when you link to Myst Island.)

These Linking Books were placed in their "places of protection" on each of Atrus' Ages, so he could get

back to Myst whenever he wanted. He was also in the habit of carrying a spare Linking Book with him... just in case (as were most D'ni who travelled in Ages).

The boys told Atrus that Catherine had used the green Book (which led to D'ni, though they'd never been there or used the Book themselves). While he was preparing to go to D'ni, they sabotaged the spare Book he normally carried with him. Hence Sirrus' message to Achenar in the imager in Channelwood:

"I hope I pushed the right button. Very interesting device, dear brother. I'm not erasing anything important, am I? He [Atrus] is preparing. Remember, take only one page."

That is the page you eventually take to Atrus, so that he can return to Myst Island.

Hope that helps,

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

From: Richard A. Watson
To: Riven Spoiler Lyst
Subject: **Re: Plot errors in MYST game?**
Date: Tue, 21 Jul 98

J.C.T. wrote:

Conclusions (please tell me if I've got it right! 😃

1. The Descriptive Book creates the link. You can link to an Age via its Descriptive Book. Even an "identical" copy of a Descriptive Book is likely to link to a _different_ age than the original.

2. Customarily, after the first time an Age is linked to, A (at least one) Linking Book is written in that Age, and is returned to D'ni for use in linking to that Age in the future. The Descriptive Book is not thereafter used for linking.

3. Function of a Linking Book: The Linking Book will function such that, when it is used, it will take you to the Age and place in which it was written. No phrases are needed in the Linking Book from any Descriptive Book in order for the Linking Book to work.

These are all correct. ☐

QUESTION: If a Descriptive Book is destroyed, do the Linking books which were written in the Described Age cease to function?

The D'ni histories don't describe exactly how this works, but if the Descriptive Book is changed, the Linking Book associated with that Book are changed as well. It would also appear that if the Descriptive Book were destroyed, that its Linking Books will cease to function.

At the end of the MYST game, Atrus is relying on you, the player, to return to him the missing page from his MYST Linking Book, so that he (and later, you) can return to MYST Island from D'ni. This, as was said, was the spare MYST Linking Book Atrus carried with him when he went to D'ni to find Catherine. This seems to imply that neither Atrus, Catherine, nor Anna had returned to D'ni from MYST in the time between MYST:BoA and Atrus' sabotaged trip to D'ni to find Catherine (if they had gone back to D'ni and back to MYST at some other time, then Atrus would find a Linking Book back to MYST in D'ni, one which worked). It's just an interesting plot point I think I've arrived at - everyone was content to stay away from D'ni for all those years, which isn't at all unreasonable. It does make one wonder what sparked Atrus to finally return and try to restore D'ni at the end, though (BoD).

You are correct. Atrus wanted the link between D'ni and Myst to remain completely severed. Catherine was the first to use the green book leading back to D'ni since Gehn had been trapped on Riven.

Shorah,

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

From: Richard A. Watson
To: Riven Spoiler Lyst
Date: Thursday, July 23, 1998

Phil W. wrote:

Am I wrong in thinking that there can be more than one book linking to a single age, i.e. Atrus' two Myst books? RAWA just told us that Atrus had to destroy all of Gehn's links to D'ni, so there could be more than one book linking there, and to Myst as well. So linking books are different than age-

> *creating books. First an age is written, then it is accessed with one or more linking books.*

Yes, Linking Books are a different issue. Since they link to the place they were written, there isn't the same "random" quality of the Descriptive Books.

You can write a bazillion Linking Books to an Age (while in the Age) without a problem (there were six different books that linked to Myst Island in the game alone). But if you write a bazillion Descriptive Books of the same Age (using a verbatim description), chances are that they'll still link to different (but very similar) Ages. So if a Descriptive Book is destroyed, you're very unlikely to ever be able to write another Book that links to it.

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

From: Richard A. Watson
To: Riven Spoiler Lyst
Date: Thursday, July 23, 1998

> *If you have a linking book in (for example) your coat pocket, and you reach inside and lightly touch your fingers on the panel to begin the linking process... What happens to you, the book, and your belongings?*

The rule of thumb for knowing what will come with you during a link is to imagine linking as just taking a step. If something comes with you when you step, it will come with you when you link. If you're wearing a hat, it will come with you. If you're carrying a bag, it will come with you. If you're just touching a desk, it doesn't come with you. The ground you're standing on doesn't come with you. The exception is the Book you use to link. It always stays behind.

> *A linking book can only link when the book is pressed and made with the right materials, using the right type of ink, and using the right words to create the link. If this is all true... Then how does the Selenitic book work. It's just an image on a screen? How does that link work? You never touch the book, much less... does a book even exist? Ideas? Please?*

The D'ni stories of Atrus mention that the Linking Book to Selenitic was powered by machinery, but does not

describe that machinery in any detail. We used the ship's screen to represent that.

😄

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

From: Richard A. Watson
To: Riven Spoiler Lyst
Date: Friday, July 24, 1998

> *When linking, does a part of your hand have to touch the book or can any part of you touch it.*

Any part of you can start the link.

> *I think the story of the first actual Age is told in the discontinued comic book series in Comic #0.*

That story is one of the legends about the beginning of the Art. There are many such legends, and they all conflict in many details. It is unlikely that we'll ever discover the truth about the discovery of the Art.

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

From: Richard A. Watson
To: The Riven Lysts
Subject: **Re: Linking Conundrums**
Date: Wednesday, July 29, 1998

Tom M. wrote:

> *How would you transport resources from one age to another? It would be easy to do for small amounts, like a handful of carrots or something. You could just put them in a bag and link, but how about bigger amounts.*

Just find something stronger than you are to carry them...

> *How would you get a pipe of water running from one age into another,*

You wouldn't.

> *or a truck load of bananas.*

Pretty simple, actually. Just look through your Ages for a domesticatable animal strong enough to move the load you want transported.

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

From: Richard A. Watson
To: The Riven Lyst
Subject: Re: Linking Conundrums
Date: Wednesday, July 29, 1998

> *Could you run water from one Age to another if you*
> *had a pipe running along the top of the linking*
> *panel so that the water fell on the panel? Would the*
> *falling water link through?*

No, the book would just get wet. 😃

Organic tissue is required to establish the Link.

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

From: Richard A. Watson
To: Riven Spoiler Lyst
Subject: **Re: Comments on Myst**
Date: Thursday, September 10, 1998

Ken T. wrote:

> *I was wondering about this a little too... either he*
> *has an open linking book to the fireplace, so he can*
> *see people who are going to link into D'ni (though I*
> *didn't see one on his desk)... or it's a special*
> *book, or Cyan was simply using a little dramatic*
> *license because their research on the Atrus story*
> *was incomplete etc. etc...*

> *One other major thing: I didn't know that sound was*
> *transmitted through the gateway images! But it*
> *happens for both the D'ni linking book and both of*
> *the trap books.*

> *As for the people in trap books being able to see*
> *outside of the book... I think that's because you're*
> *not actually in an age: you're stuck in the link...*
> *so you can see (and hear) what's happening outside*
> *through the gateway image (this is definite, because*
> *it happens in Riven, which I think of as a much more*
> *credible source than Myst... but that's just my*
> *opinion* 😃

My stance for all of the above is "artistic license for
gameplay reasons."

Sound doesn't travel through the books, and there is no way that Atrus could have actually seen you from D'ni or for the brothers to see out of their books, or for you to see out of the prison books.

But if Atrus wasn't able to tell you to make sure you had the page before coming to D'ni, bad things would happen (you'd be "forced" to get trapped in D'ni, then travel back in time (restore) to get the page). If the brothers couldn't talk to you, you'd have no feedback on your progress in Myst (and you'd have to try all 300 fireplace combos. 😀

And if we didn't let you see out of the books, you wouldn't have had a clue what had happened when you released the brothers, you'd just be stuck in a black screen. Not very informative.

Just my opinion,

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

From: Richard A. Watson
To: Riven Spoiler Lyst
Subject: **Re: Linking...**
Date: Tuesday, November 17, 1998

> *A fan wrote that he didn't think the story of the sea beast who swallowed a linking book and then linked inside out, as told in Klinvo's tale at the Riven Journals*, was reliable evidence on linking.*

The journals are apocryphal. They shouldn't be considered reliable for this kind of information.

Shorah,

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

* Editor's Note: Klvino's Journal was one of the Riven Journals, a web site game created by Organic on behalf of Cyan as a treat for the fans before the release of Riven. These Journals are no longer on the web.

1999 Miscellany

From: Richard A. Watson
To: Riven Spoiler Lyst
Subject: **Re: WHEN D'ni might exist...**
Date: Monday, February 01, 1999

> *Hmmmmm... I'm no D'ni physicist, but what if...
> well... *thinking hard**
>
> *Aha! I may be wrong, (I probably am) but I don't
> think you can write a book to another time in an age.
> I mean, you would just be creating a whole new age,
> right? Better ask RAWA.*

In theory, it's _possible_. In practice, it's not
probable.

No matter how specifically you write a Book, there are
chaotic elements in the selection of the Age, and since
countless Ages will match any given description, you
don't have enough control to link to a specific Age,
let alone a specific time in a specific Age.

Hope that helps,

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

2000 Miscellany

From: Richard A. Watson
To: Riven Spoiler Lyst
Date: February 1, 2000

Ken T. wrote:

> *There's no way to bring the book that you're linking
> with you when you link... this is why Atrus had to
> drop his Myst book into the fissure to trap Gehn on
> Riven. If he could have just taken it with him, it
> would have been a lot easier.*

Yep

> *Now as for the brothers removing a page from Atrus'
> Myst book ... you're running on the assumption that
> the Myst book was always in D'ni. Perhaps the Myst
> book was on Myst, or on one of the other Mystian*

ages, and the brothers got at it without Atrus knowing.

Hence the message from Sirrus to Achenar in the recording device in Channelwood:

"He [Atrus] is preparing [to go do D'ni]. Remember, take only one page."

- - - -

Then when Atrus took his Myst book with him to go to D'ni, that was his only way back.

Yep.

Now this brings up the question -- why wasn't there already a Myst book in D'ni? ... Where *was* Myst written anyway? (It's been a while since BoA...sorry 😊 *... Well I'd venture to guess that that Myst book (which used to be in D'ni) was the one Atrus brought to Riven, and dropped down the star fissure.*

Yep. Atrus was very careful not to leave a link to Myst from D'ni (when preparing to trap his father in Riven at the end of the book of Atrus). He couldn't be sure his plan would work, or that he wouldn't miss one of Gehn's links back to D'ni, so he wanted to sever all the links between Myst and D'ni, just in case.

Which, of course, is why he brought another Myst linking book when he went to D'ni after the brothers tricked him into going there -- because he knew there was no Myst linking book there.

Yep.

Nice explanation, Ken.

😊

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

From: Richard A. Watson
To: The Riven Spoiler Lyst
Date: Wednesday, May 10, 2000

Paraphrase of fan question: If a Descriptive Book is destroyed, could another Book be made to link to the same Age?

Answer from another fan: Not likely, if the original Descriptive Book has been destroyed. The odds of writing another link to it are nil.

Just being nit-picky (what else is new?):

Because there are countless Ages that fit any given description, no matter how detailed, there is a chaotic (random) element in the process of the Book selecting which Age it links to. This will make the odds of writing a Link to the same exact Age twice _extremely_ remote (even if you copy the first Book verbatim). Possible, yes. Probable, no, but the odds are slightly better than nil. 😃

Hope that helps,

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

From: Richard A. Watson
To: Riven Spoiler Lyst
Subject: **Re: Of bad guys and Atrus... trailer**
Date: Thursday, May 11, 2000

L.L. wrote:

> *I'm usually in lurker mode here, but the trailer and something another lyster said made me feel compelled to respond. In the movie, Atrus says "And it amazes me to think that the stroke of a pen can bring worlds to life." Kinda settles the old creation vs. pre-existing, doesn't it? That is, unless RAWA has something to add.*

Just one thing... don't use text intended for marketing as proof text in a debate like this. 😃

(It's the note on the back of the Myst box all over again...)*

😃

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

* Editor's Note: Here is an email that explains what RAWA means by "the back of the Myst box all over again."

From: Richard A. Watson
To: Riven Spoiler Lyst
Subject: **Re: Journal on Box**
Date: Friday, October 02, 1998

S.A. wrote:

> *If you look on the back of the Myst box. You find a journal entry written by Atrus. Notice at the end, how his writing ends suddenly, as if he was attacked, or something caught his attention. Any ideas as to why he broke off so suddenly?*

One word: marketing.

It is _not_ a note from Atrus.

It doesn't even make sense. "I dare not write further without revealing too much." Huh?

I notice it's even on the Ages of Myst website. Wonderful. <--- (sarcasm)

Grrr...

I know, I know... more therapy.

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

From: Richard A. Watson
To: Riven Spoiler Lyst
Date: Friday, June 23, 2000

J.F. wrote:

> *But we still don't have a definitive answer about whether or not sound travels through the gateway image....*

How's this...

game answer - when we need it to for a specific reason, yes.

real answer - No. Sound doesn't travel through the Books.

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

From: Richard A. Watson
To: Riven Spoiler Lyst
Subject: **Re: Riven and Exile questions...**
Date: Wednesday, September 13, 2000

B. G. wrote:

> *Shorah! I have a question about the end of Riven. At the end, you fall in to the Star Fissure after the*

> *Myst Linking Book. I assume you land back in the Age of Earth*

Feel free to run with that assumption.

> *, but the book fell in about half a minute earlier!*

And the first Myst linking book fell some 30 years ago, and still managed to make it to Earth. A few seconds will not have a noticable effect...

> *Another question, about Trapped Gehn. If Linking makes a biological reaction with the skin, then how come when Atrus linked to Riven to retrieve Catherine, he could bring a linking book? Paper is made out of trees! Does someone have an explanation???*

What establishes a link, and what can link once a link is established are two separate issues. Setting a pen on the linking panel will not cause it to link. Having it in your hand/pocket when you touch the panel will.

How's that?

😬

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

From: Richard A. Watson
To: Riven Spoiler Lyst
Subject: **Re: Linking book problems**
Date: Friday, December 08, 2000

H.P. wrote:

> *1. When you go into the D'ni prison book, and Gehn prepares to go after you, he links with is gloves on! Am I correct in assuming that to establish a link you need to touch the panel with flesh? Can someone clarify?*

The short answer - yes, living tissue is required to establish a link, but some dead organic material (like the outer layer of your skin, for example) will not interfere. Gehn's gloves, it would seem, fall into the category of dead organic materials that don't interfere.

> *2. I read Catherine's journal and it reminded me that in BoA, it says that Catherine and Anna wrote the daggers and fissures into Age 5! This I don't understand. When you add things into the descriptive book of Riven, wouldn't it change the link to another age, one exactly like Riven but with daggers*

and fissures? According to the D'ni, the age isn't created, it is just linked to, so how could changes in the descriptive book, change Riven?

Another short answer - not necessarily. It depends on the magnitude and type of changes made.

Better, longer, more complete answers to these questions (and many others that frequently appear on the lyst) are archived in several places. Here are two of the best that I know of, though I am sure there are many others as well:

http://www.rivenguild.com/kbahnsen/linkingfaq.html*

http://www.fortunecity.com/underworld/riven/473/info.html*

Hope that helps,

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

*Editor's note: Both sites are now defunct.

2001 Miscellany

From: Richard A. Watson
June 26, 2001

[Discusses the box which contains the Linking Book back to D'ni from Age 37 (BoA, chapter 11).]

One fan wrote:

I always assumed that Gehn had brought the box from D'ni on a subsequent visit and had put the book inside it himself. I thought he could lay the book open inside the box, slip his hand under the lid, touch the panel, and link. The lid of the box would close, and the book would remain protected from the elements.

Another fan wrote:

A thought I had myself. My problem with this is: will linking work this way. I mean, you're not away in an instant, are you? As I see it, some time is needed to get linked completely. Normally not a problem, because the book is laying open somewhere, so the "beam" (???) of "energy" (???) can be transported through the linking panel. But in the

> *case above, suddenly a lid (or a whole box) is in the way. Will it work still? I have some doubts on that. I'm just not sure.*

RAWA wrote:

The link will work fine.

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

From: Richard A. Watson
June 27, 2001

> *What I'm really wondering is if the statement made in the strategy guide is accurate. The guide says that once the Age "dies," the linking panel no longer works. If that is true, then when can an Age be said to have died? Was BoD inaccurate when they linked that one guy to Sedona in the E.V. suit and discovered that the planet had gone nova? Is going nova not enough for an Age to be considered dead?*

But there is a significant difference between Sedona and Riven:

Sedona was a properly written Age that happened to have its star explode.

Riven's instability was caused by Gehn's tampering, and was further affected by the mysterious Fissure.

These differences may account for why one Book still worked, while the other did not.

http://www.fortunecity.com/underworld/riven/473/info.html

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

From Ask Dr. Watson on the D'ni Guild
June 28, 2001

D. S. wrote:

> *If you burn all of the linking books to an age does that mean that the age is destroyed?*

Not at all. The Linking Books just provide links to an Age. One analogy would be to think of a Linking Book as similar to a bridge, and an Age as an island. If you burn the bridge, the island will still exist, you just won't be able to get to it.

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

From: Richard A. Watson
Date: July 11, 2001

A fan wrote:

> *So why is it impossible to link to an earlier time in an age?*

Just wanted to clear one thing up, then I'll let y'all get back to discussing linking theory...

There isn't anything that says linking to the same Age at a different time is impossible in the "it _cannot_ happen" sense of the word, but it is so extremely unlikely that it for all intents and purposes it is considered impossible in the "it _does not_ happen" sense of the word.

It's the same reason that it is "impossible" to write two Descriptive Books (not Linking Books) to the same Age (even ignoring whether it's the same time or earlier time, etc.), even if you write the exact same words in both Books.

The illustration I usually use to demonstrate this is the idea of flipping a fair coin and getting heads a billion times in a row. There's no reason that it _cannot_ happen, but I for one will not be the one to keep flipping coins until it happens.

To add trying to link to a specific time in a specific Age into the equation makes "impossible" even more extremely unlikely. 😃

The problem is a side effect of the Great Tree of Possibilities. No matter how detailed your description, there are innumerable Ages out there that will match it, and there is an uncontrollable, unpredictable "chaotic" element that "decides" which Age the Book will link to. They may be indistinguishable as far as we're concerned, but they will be distinct, separate Ages.

Carry on...

😃

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

From: Richard A. Watson
Subject: **Re: I thought you guys would get a kick out of this**
Date: Thursday, July 19, 2001

RAWA wrote:

> *In Myst he gives you his library, in Riven he sends you home. In Exile he takes you to Releeshahn.*

A fan wrote:

> *How do we KNOW he sends us home in Riven? I thought that was speculation... all I know is when I end Riven it feels like I just jump into an endless void.*

RAWA wrote:

One of the problems with the games is that there isn't any way to have real-time, interactive conversations that you'd actually have with Atrus if you were there, without resorting to hideous, disgusting, "You're-in-a-game-now", evil, conversation tree kind of things ("don't hold back, RAWA, how do you really feel about putting conversation trees in Myst?").

The games try to get the most vital information across, but we're limited to a short speech where the player's part of the conversation is implied. But if you dig, the info you're looking for is there.

From the Epilogue:

> *"And though I am unable to understand how, the very flow of stars that brought my Myst book into worthy hands, I am sure served as a safe passage home for my friend."*

From Gehn's journal re: the Fissure:

> *"It seems that the fabric of this Age has been breached in a way that permits matter to be hospitably exchanged between two discreet but overlapping spaces - much like a Link."*

That implies that he knows it's safe, he just doesn't know where it goes. You, the player, know that it goes from Riven to Earth - that's how you got the Myst Book in the first place...

A fan wrote:

> *And a library? I've always wanted a library....*

From Atrus' speech at the end of Myst:

> *"Oh, and reward. I'm sorry, but all I have to offer you is the library on the island of Myst. The books that are contained there."*

It's not much. He knows that. But at this point, he doesn't have anything else to offer.

A fan wrote:

> *I consider myself a fan of the games, and I have played Myst, Riven, realMyst, and read the Book of Atrus. I was under the assumption that all the people he did help in the games and book were "D'ni" I have read the journals in Myst and Riven, but again, I thought everyone was D'ni.*

I don't know what to say to that one. The journals in Myst and Riven seem pretty clear on this to me. Admittedly that's easy for me to see from this side of things.

But the Book of Atrus, IMO, is _really_ clear that the D'ni are out of the story during the time of Myst and Riven.

Sorry it isn't clearer.

😄

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

From: Richard A. Watson
Subject: **Re: Linking books - can you see the words?**
Date: Friday, September 07, 2001

on 9/4/01, J. Patrick Greer wrote:

> *When a linking book is finished can you still see the words in other pages besides the one with the linking panel?*

Yes, you can still see the words.

> *Is the panel on the first, last or another page?*

Generally the panel is near the beginning of the Book, just for the sake of convenience. The vast majority of the people who want to use the Book just want to open the Book and link. But it is not required to be there.

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

2002 Miscellany

From: Lisandra
To: Kehrin
Subject: **[Fwd: Checking for accuracy]**
Date: Friday, May 31, 2002 4:20 PM

Hi Kehrin,

When I was working on my site I received this answer from RAWA. Since you've collected emails from him on Linking, I thought you might like to have this one since it gives a little more info on the Tree of Possibility.

Shorah,

Lisandra

Lisandra wrote to RAWA:

Hi RAWA,

I'm including a statement in a commentary and I just want to make sure I'm stating it accurately. If you would be so kind as to check it at your convenience, I'd really appreciate it. I hate asking you. You must be busy beyond belief. If you have anything to add or elucidate, please feel free. Thanks a bunch.

Shorah,

Lisandra

Statement:

"The branches of the Great Tree grow without end, yet the Maker knows them all" This quote is found on D'niGuild, presumably a D'ni proverb. Apparently Cyantists have been aware of the concept of a Great Tree of Possibilities since they first began to reveal the D'ni saga in Myst. RAWA wrote in a letter to fans on Nov 14, 1997, "In the 'infinity' of the 'Tree of Possibilities' there are countless worlds to match any description you can write. There is a chaotic element in how the Book selects which of those many worlds it will link to, which even the D'ni never were able to compensate for." The Great Tree is how the D'ni communicate their understanding of quantum reality and parallel universes. When a Descriptive Book is written, it will link at some point on a branch of the great tree. If the Descriptive Book is changed, it still links to the same age, but to another branch i.e. another reality.

RAWA wrote to Lisandra:

It looks good as is.

The last sentence touches on a very complicated subject - changes to the Descriptive Book. I'm not sure how to state more clearly how it works without going off on a few dozen tangents. It's possible to make changes that will force the Book to link to another Age entirely. It's possible to make changes that further define the Age without linking to a different Age, etc. Very tricky stuff, and I'm not sure that you'd even really want to get into it... it raises more questions than it answers.

😊

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

From: Dr. Watson, DRC Member
Posted to: DRC Discussions Forum, DRC Org website
Subject: **Unbelievable**
Date: December 11, 2002

Unbelievable.

I spoke with one of the Uru explorers yesterday. I personally watched him use the mysterious Book. The Book did not remain behind. It indeed went with him. Frankly, I had really expected this to be some kind of hoax.

We have never found a D'ni Book that can do this. It obviously would have been useful enough that one would think that the D'ni would have figured out how to do it long ago if it were possible, but none of their Books can do this.

And that's not the only D'ni rule that this Book breaks. You are not going to believe this one, Vic. Wait. I'm getting ahead of myself.

Anyway, the explorer came back shortly after, and offered to let me see the Age it links to. I was hesitant, since we know so little about this Book, but I agreed.

The Book links to a small island, only it's not surrounded by water, it's surrounded by clouds. There is only one small building and a few small trees.

My host had another surprise for me. As I watched, he used his Book again and re-appeared at the link-in spot

on the other side of the island. I wouldn't have believed it if I hadn't seen it myself. He was able to link within an Age. No D'ni Books can do that either.

I am really not sure what to make of this Book. It does not conform to the D'ni rules we've learned over the years. Until we have a better understanding about how this Book works and why it can break some of the D'ni rules that we know, and have some kind of assurance that breaking these D'ni rules is safe, we should not encourage their use. We cannot stop the Uru explorers from using their Books, but we need to be clear that if they choose to continue using them, that they are using them at their own risk. I will not be using any of those Books again until I better understand them, and I insist the other DRC members refrain as well.

I think it's time that I talk with Prof. Zandi directly.

Dr. Watson

From: Victor Laxman, DRC Member
Posted to: DRC Discussions Forum, DRC Org website
Subject: **Unbelievable**
Date: December 12, 2002

Then you think that Zandi is writing this book???
Surely not!!!

v

From: Dr. Watson, DRC Member
Posted to: DRC Discussions Forum, DRC Org website
Subject: **Unbelievable**
Date: December 13, 2002

No, I don't think he's writing them, Vic. Zandi knows even less of the Art and the Books than we do. We are a long way from being able to write Books of our own; he could not have written these Books. But if they are of D'ni origin, why haven't we ever found, or even heard of any other Books that work this way?

I have many questions but not many answers at the moment.

Dr. Watson

2003 Miscellany

Posted to the DRC webboards:

Dr. Watson
DRC Member # 38
posted May 05, 2003

I don't wish to stifle these kinds of debates, so I
usually stay out of them. However, I'll make a brief
exception here to give you something to consider.

quote:

> *Originally posted by Shu:*
>
> *As to the changes in Ages, ANY change in text should
> shift the link IF THE AGES ARE PRE-EXISTING.*

When discussing theories, it is important to come up
with hypotheses like this one. It is dangerous, however,
to hold a hypothesis so tightly that it blinds you to
other possibilities. If your hypothesis turns out to be
incorrect, then the conclusions based on that
hypothesis will very likely turn out to be incorrect as
well.

Atrus obviously made changes to Ages and was still
convinced that they were pre-existing and that he did
not create them. Atrus was not deluding himself, and he
seemed to have a pretty good grasp of what he was doing.
Maybe he figured out something that you have not
considered yet because you are treating this particular
hypothesis as fact.

We now return you to your regularly scheduled debate...

Dr. W.
From: D'ni Cavern

2004 Miscellany

From: Richard A. Watson
To: Brendon
Date: Thursday, January 08, 2004

> *Dear Richard A. Watson,*
>
> *My friend and I have been having a serious debate.
> My opinion is that Ri'neref only wrote the Cavern of
> D'ni into the Book of Earth, and maybe the surface
> area above it, but he didn't write any other part of
> Earth. The Great Tree of Possibilities, in my
> opinion, filled in the rest of the surface world. I
> really don't think that Ri'neref could write such an
> enormous, successful Age in the lifetime that he had.*

It is not known for certain exactly how much he wrote, but it is very unlikely that he took the time to write all of the details outside of the cavern. It is far more likely that he focused on what they needed to survive, and the rest was "filled in" for him as you've suggested.

> *Another question to go with this one, How long does it take to write an Age? A normal, average-sized Age, about the size of Stoneship. If it takes a short while (a month or two) then maybe Ri'neref could have written such an Age as Earth in the time he had. If Atrus spent a year or two writing Stoneship, then I am correct, Ri'neref couldn't write such a large age.*

It just depends on how much detail you use in your writing. The more detailed you are in your descriptions, the longer it will take, obviously.

> *Please clarify my opinions. I would be most grateful.*

> *Thank you,*

> *Brendon AKA Darkest90*

Hope that helps,

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

Numbering and Math

Letter 1

RAWA, is it true that the "X" is a D'ni 25? And, if so, it that method preferred over writing a D'ni "10"? (I've sort of assumed that a blank box is the number 0, correct me if I'm wrong.)

Yes, 25 can be written in two different ways in D'ni, the X on the Book of D'ni is the number 25 written as a single digit. It is the only digit that has this dual representation. The single digit 25 is rarely used, it is far more common to see "10" for 25 instead.

0 is not an empty box, but is a box with a single dot in the center. The map included with the Book of Ti'ana has at least two zeroes in it. (I didn't look very long to find those two, there may be more.)

Shorah,

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

Letter 2

I know this was discussed immediately upon the opening of the spoiler lyst... and I may have missed a message or two. Did anyone uncover the meaning of the '/' number? That's the only missing piece in my number knowledge.

Just to help curb the confusion here, the single diagonal slash was an error in the original D'ni number font we made. The only place that I know the old font was used by mistake is on the watch in Gehn's bedroom.

Sorry for the confusion.

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

Letter 3

In the original game design, 25 was meant to be figured out by process of elimination. But later we decided to

just not use it at all. I just double-checked the prototype to make sure that I was remembering correctly, and when generating the dome combo, it doesn't use 1 or 25.

It is possible that Broderbund (Mac/PC) or Sunsoft (Game machines) didn't implement this limitation in their versions. Out of the dozens of times I've played each of their versions, I never got 1 or 25 in the dome combo, but that may just have been coincidence.

A Fan wrote:

If the D'ni numbering system is base 25 (and it is), then 25 would be two digits. The first would be the symbol for 1, followed by a symbol for 0. I believe the symbol for 0 is a square with a dot in the middle. (25 x 1) + 0 = 25 We use the same logic for Gehn's Age 233. (25 X 9) + 8 + 233

For mathematical purposes you are correct. In these cases, twenty-five is always represented as two digits ("10"). But the D'ni also has a single symbol for 25 used in other instances (like comparisons, where they judge things on a scale from 1 to 25).

One Fan wrote:

BTW, the symbol for zero is a square with a single diagonal line. Check Gehn's timepiece. When it's open, there are number symbols on the upper area of the inner cylinder. They begin with this symbol, and continue with the symbols for one, two, three, etc.

Another Fan wrote:

I disagree. I believe the square with the diagonal line is an error. I remember a post many months ago stating the square with a dot inside is "0". I believe it was RAWA who posted it. But I may be wrong. Maybe both are correct.

There are two ways of looking at this:

1) The number on the timepiece was meant to be 25, but there was an error in the font that was used.

2) The single slash is a special symbol representing the combination of 0 (a dot) and 25 (an "x") only used in cases like the clock where the number sequence is cyclical, and can be thought of as wrapping around upon itself.

#1 is the truth, but I like #2 better. 🙂

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

Number 5

From: Mark DeForest
Date: Monday, July 06, 1998

> *5 wasn't a special number in Riven, it was a special number in the D'ni culture.*

Actually 5 was not special to D'ni either, but Gehn mistakenly thought it was. Gehn only has childhood memories of D'ni and later whatever he was able to dig up in D'ni years after the fall of D'ni. To say the least Gehn was a little 'warped' and he would 'warp' everything he touched, such as his obsession with the number 5.

mark

From: Richard A. Watson
Date: Friday, September 17, 1999

I think the point is that the D'ni weren't _obsessed_ with five the way Gehn was. Five is special to D'ni in many of the same ways that 10 is special to us. Gehn just blew it _way_ out of proportion, trying to connect _everything_ around him to five. He considered everything not connected with five to be inferior.

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

Gor—ahn

RAWA
Posted: Mon Mar 05, 2007 12:48 pm   Post subject: **35 vs 36 seconds - A ten year old typo**

In an IC thread, Marten wrote:

> *So how long IS a gor-ahn, if not 36 seconds?*

> *It is between 34.8096s and 34.848s. So... about 35 seconds, not 36.*

> *Mystery solved.*

Good catch!

I went back to my original timekeeping notes to see if I had it wrong there, and it said "about 35 seconds". So I went looking through the places where this has been posted.

It would seem that that typo has been around for over ten years, since that's how it has been on riven.com since '97. Then that info was apparently copied to the DRC site back in 2002 or so, which was recently copied into the neighborhood with the added information for the Pahrtahvo time unit.

The mention on Riven.com will probably not be updated. The DRC site's Time description will be fixed "soon". The information in the classroom will hopefully be fixed in the next update.

Apologies for the inconvenience.

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Tue Mar 06, 2007 11:16 am   Post subject:

Calam wrote:

> *Quote:*
>
> > *The DRC site's Time description will be fixed "soon".*
>
> *"Soon" here having the meaning of what?*

It's already been fixed on the site, so that "soon" really was soon. As with the correction of the paper in the 'hood, since I'm not the one physically making the correction, I don't know exactly when it will be done, so my time frames are intentionally vague.

But you're used to that, right?

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

Language

Cho

This letter explains what Cho, the first person you meet on Riven, says to you and what it means.

> *That Rick hears a _b'_ 'to' seems to clinch the idea that we have a pronoun here. It would be nice to know whether the correct spelling of this pronoun 'me' is "so" ("soh") or "soo", but I suppose that even if we were absolutely sure of Cho's pronunciation we wouldn't know that it is correct.*

That's a good point - even knowing what Cho says doesn't mean he's right...

I'll help out with this one.

Like Mark Deforest has said... Gehn has a hard time getting good help.

What Cho says:

> *tahg-em-ah... re-ko-ah (stutters) tah... tah... tah...tahg-em-ah b'soo re-ko-ah*

translates roughly to:

> *give-you(command) the-"ko-ah" (whatever that is).... gi...gi...gi...give-you(command) to-me (not pronounced quite right) the-"ko-ah"*

What he's "supposed" to say:

> *tah-ge-mah b'zoo ah re-kor*

> *give-you(command) to-me the-book.*

which is:

> *"Gimme that book!"*

😬

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

Editor's Note: In the letter above RAWA refers something Mark said. That would be Mark DeForest, long time Cyan programmer. Here is what Mark wrote to the Riven Lyst about Cho's speech.

Actually, the way the story goes is that Cho was instructed by Gehn to watch the caged linking spot in case someone (Gehn hoping for Atrus) will show up. When someone does, Gehn also instructed Cho to say a few D'ni phrases. However, Cho has been watching the cage for a *long* time and really thinks that no one will ever show up. Then _you_ link in, surprising Cho but in a way he is excited to see someone new and starts talking to you in Rivenese. Then Cho remembers that he is supposed to say a D'ni phrase that he has memorized (but not too well, it's hard to get good help). After messing that up, he decides to do the next thing on Gehn's list, which is to take any linking books. But of course, with the help of the rebel, he screws that up too.

Mark

Ꝗ

Rik
Posted: Wed Oct 11, 2006 9:47 pm — Post subject: **The KI**

I guess this might be a good place to ask about this, since the pronunciation of Kemo has come up. How is KI pronounced? I understand that the KI was found with the D'ni symbol for 3 (KI) on the back of it. So they called it the KI. I have reasoned that since it looks like the capital letters K and I, that the DRC called it that, pronouncing the letters separately: "kay, eye". I know a lot of people who pronounce it as one word such as "kee" or "kye". Is there an official DRC pronunciation? Also, is there a picture of what the back of the KI looks like?

Nine-O-Nine
Posted: Wed Oct 11, 2006 10:03 pm — Post subject:

Actually.... When you play PotS, if you go to the Kirel hood, you hear Dr. Watson say "Kee" in the recording of a little speech he gave, in the community hall there..

That's as official as I've heard...

909

Maratanos
Posted: Wed Oct 11, 2006 10:04 pm — Post subject:

like the word "key."

And it'd just look like any other D'ni 3...

RAWA
Posted: Wed Oct 11, 2006 11:46 pm — Post subject:

Yep. The DRC dubbed it "KI" because, when written, that resembles the D'ni numeral for three. They pronounce it "key" because that happens to be one of the functions that the KI is useful for.

Those DRC people are so punny.

😬

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

Pronunciation

RAWA
Posted: Wed Oct 11, 2006 8:12 pm — Post subject:

Ian Atrus wrote:

> **Whilyam wrote:**
>
> > *many other areas and ages are pronounced differently than they are spelled or would be spelled in D'ni (Ae'gura, not Ay'goorah, Eder not Ehdur). It's just the way the D'ni was translated so it looked good in the English language.*
>
> *Makes it hard to pronounce for non-English people though, as we have to guess whether any name is to be read with D'ni or English rules, or a mix of the two.*

As Whilyam has pointed out the English transliterations in the games/novels (especially names of people or places) are usually selected for their aesthetics, rather than strictly conforming to the standard used when transliterating for pronunciation. (There are too many examples to count, including "Atrus" (Ay-trus), "Gehn" (Gen), "Yeesha" (Yee-shah), "D'ni" (D'nee), etc.)

It is, indeed, unfortunate that it makes it difficult to be sure how they're pronounced. When there is doubt, feel free to ask. You may even get a response. 🙂

In this instance, "Kemo" is pronounced "kee-mo" (d'nifont: KEmo).

Hope that helps,

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Wed Oct 11, 2006 9:19 pm — Post subject:

JWPlatt wrote:

> *Just for fun, would this be a good time to bring up "Duck-nee" again?*
>
> 😊

No, there's never a good time for that, even just for "fun". 😛

www2 wrote:

> *Is the E in Eder pronounced as ee, or eh? I always thought it was Eeder :?*

Honestly, I've been pronouncing it "Eeder", too, but, in fact, "eder" is the correct D'ni pronunciation. (D'nifont: eDer)

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Thu Oct 12, 2006 12:15 am — Post subject:

JWPlatt wrote:

> **Junee wrote:**
>
> > *Duck-knee?*
>
> *The pronunciation of D'ni used at Rand's request by David Ogden Stiers portraying Esher in Myst V: End of Ages despite concerns from, uh, D'ni historians.*

<fights urge to comment>
<sighs>
<"Don't do it, man!">
<comments anyway>

Close. David Ogden Stiers suggested Esher's particular pronunciation, and Rand liked it and gave it the OK despite concerns from, uh, D'ni historians.

I'm still sticking to my theory that Esher's pronunciation is the result of a speech impediment. Please quit teasing him about it; you might hurt his feelings.

😃

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Thu Oct 12, 2006 5:59 pm — Post subject:

Reverend Vader wrote:

> **RAWA wrote:**
>
> > *Close. David Ogden Stiers suggested Esher's particular pronunciation, and Rand liked it and gave it the OK despite concerns from, uh, D'ni historians.*
>
> *Heh heh. This from the guy that started this whole Myst/Uru thing and originally pronounced it "Dunny." (And **spelled** it that way, too!)*
>
> 😃

The original transliteration of "Dunny" was consistent with our method of Anglicizing the names of people and places. It would still be transliterated that way today if it weren't for all the laughter it generated in a particular portion of the southern hemisphere.

😃

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

Rebirth

Sh'aeri
Posted: Fri Oct 27, 2006 7:53 pm — Post subject:
Linguistic assistance please...

I guess I need to put up the RAWA signal...

Ok, here's the deal...

I'm making something and I need a D'ni word because I don't want to do it the, what I think is, slop way of writing the English (or in this case, Latin) word in

D'ni font. I'd really like the actual word translated into D'ni...

Ok...what I'm looking for is:

What is the word for "Rebirth" in D'ni...or better yet, I need the translation for "Renascentiae" which is Latin for "Rebirth". And how exactly do I spell it in English to get the word to come out right in D'ni font?

Thanks in advance for your help.

Owehn
Posted: Fri Oct 27, 2006 8:04 pm — Post subject:

Hmm, Rebirth...

We don't have a word for "birth," but we can construct one from "new" and "existence": "mahn'nee." Then adding the re- prefix we get "D'mahn'nee."

Oh, and the D'ni Linguistic Fellowship is a great place to look for answers to questions about the D'ni language. We don't know as much as RAWA, but we're virtually guaranteed to get back to you faster.

Sh'aeri
Posted: Fri Oct 27, 2006 8:21 pm — Post subject:

Owehn,

When going on to the DLF site...what category do newbs post their questions? Do y'all have a section for "Ask a Linguist"? Sorry, I didn't know exactly where to go.

Dan'nee
Posted: Fri Oct 27, 2006 8:51 pm — Post subject:

You'd probably want to go here: http://linguists.bahro.com/forums/index.php?showforum=26. It's the forum for beginning questions. <shrug>

As far as rebirth... how do you mean it? I take it you don't mean, like, and actual birth taking place again. I don't think we have a word, yet, that directly translates to rebirth, but the word "D'ni" means "New Start" (and it's actually spelled d'nee.

But yeah, ask over at DLF.

Sh'aeri
Posted: Fri Oct 27, 2006 10:08 pm — Post subject:

How do I mean it....

I mean it in the sense that we'll be going home again soon...

I was a Prologuer...so I mean it in the sense of a Phoenix rising from the ashes, the rebirth of our home world...

Does that help?

RAWA
Posted: Fri Oct 27, 2006 10:46 pm — Post subject:

devokan (D'nifont: DevoKån)

Literally, it translates as "rebirth", but it is also idiomatically used to represent "hope", as it was used in the Book of D'ni.

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

Age Names

RAWA
Posted: Mon Dec 11, 2006 10:21 pm — Post subject:

K'laamas wrote:

> *"Gahreesen" literally sounds like "gah-rees-en", which means "and it eats", but this is probably a coincidence, like "therapist" looking like "the rapist". "Gahreesen" also looks suspiciously like D'ninglish for "Garrison" *twitch-twitch*. Hopefully, it's actual D'ni, in which case it's probably a contraction of "gahro-reesen", meaning "Great [Something]".*

While I generally leave these kinds of mysteries alone so you all have things to discuss, debate, and discover on your own, I realize that it's also sometimes nice to occasionally get a confirmation.

So, in that spirit, here's a small present:

<garEsen> "Gah-ree-sen" is derived from three D'ni words:

<garo> "gah-ro" - adj. great, mighty
<arEu> "ah-ree-uh" - v. to protect
<senaren> "sen-ah-ren" - n. building/structure

So, basically, it's a mighty structure for protection. It would more accurately be translated as "fortress", but since it sounds so similar to "garrison", it has been generally translated as "garrison".

Hence, those two terms ("gahreesen" and "garrison") are used interchangeably by the majority of the DRC members, and when someone (who shall remain nameless) says anything about the difference, he is generally dismissed as being needlessly pedantic.

Not that he's bitter.

😄

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Thu Dec 14, 2006 1:31 am — Post subject:

Rabenschwinge wrote:

> *So - can we assume, that "Rezeero" neither is "D´ninglish"?*

Yes, <rezEro> ("the [blank]") is an accurate D'ni word. Of course, for fear of further damaging my reputation, I'll refrain from actually giving you another definition so soon, and let you debate its meaning a while longer.

😄

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Fri Feb 23, 2007 11:21 am   Post subject:

D'nifont: xogal

RST*: tsogahl

Official DRC spelling: Tsogal

Common DRC misspellings: Tsoghal, Tsogahl, Tsvengali

*RAWA Standard Transliteration

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

Clock

Marten
Posted: Wed May 10, 2006 2:23 pm   Post subject: **A word we don't know...**

This just occurred to me.

Some of the neighborhoods have some very impressive time-keeping devices, yet we've never been enlightened on the D'ni word for them.

Does anyone know and care to share?

RAWA
Posted: Wed May 10, 2006 3:06 pm   Post subject:

<sneaks out of the OOC forum>

<whispers, "go-rah-yan" (D'ni font: gorayÃ¥n)>

<sneaks back to the OOC forum>

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

Atrus/Aitrus/A'trus

RAWA
Posted: Thu May 18, 2006 9:23 am   Post subject:

bongmaster wrote:

> *there is in D'ni language* 😀
>
> *old habits die hard* 🙂 *it's how I 1st found out how to spell it* 😀
>
> *English- Atrus*
>
> *D'ni- A'trus*
>
> *both spellings are correct I assure u* 😀
>
> *not that it matters* 🙂

Actually, "Atrus" doesn't have an apostrophe in English or in D'ni. See, for example, the map that came with BoT. (Yes, I'm aware that the name on the map is Atrus' grandfather's, but their names were spelled the same in D'ni and transliterated to English two different ways to make clear that they are two separate people.)

Not that it matters. 🙂

😃

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Thu May 18, 2006 1:45 pm   Post subject: **More than you wanted to know about Aitrus/Atrus**

Atrus - The English spelling of Atrus, son of Gehn

Aitrus - The English spelling of Atrus, father of Gehn.

Both are pronounced "ay-trus".

The D'ni spelling is the same: Atrus (in Cyan's D'ni font)

The English spelling was changed mainly to help keep the two people distinct.

I had an ulterior motive when I suggested it when the BoT was written, however. I was tired of always hearing Atrus' name pronounced "at-rus" to rhyme with "mattress". I first suggested changing the spelling of Atrus' grandfather's name to "Aytrus" to help clear up the pronunciation, because I had always used "ay" to transliterate the long "a" in D'ni. But we agreed that we liked the "look" of "Aitrus" better, and it served the purpose well enough. Now if people ask how the "ai" in "Aitrus" is pronounced, I can give examples like "wait", "bait", etc.

geekspeek wrote:

   how would A'trus be pronounced?

An apostrophe following a vowel represents a glottal stop. So you say the "ay" and stop the air briefly with your vocal chords before saying the "trus", just as you stop the air briefly with your vocal chords between the syllables of "uh-oh".

Shorahmin wrote:

   For example, from Escher's pronunciation, ducknee is closer than dunny but not quite right.

Don't get me started on "ducknee". An apostrophe following a consonant represents a "schwa" from Hebrew. So even if the D'ni glottal stop were as hard as Esher made it sound, it wouldn't have shown up in the word "D'ni". Personally, I'm sticking with my theory that Esher had a bizarre speech impediment caused by being bitten by the snakes in Noloben too many times, and for some reason, it only seemed to manifest itself when he tried to pronounce "D'ni." Stranger things have happened.

😃

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Thu May 18, 2006 4:01 pm   Post subject: **Re: More than you wanted to know about Aitrus/Atrus**

JWPlatt wrote:

> *Actually, I figured David Ogden Steirs was never provided a pronunciation coach, and that by the time anyone heard the tapes, he had flown back to his far away villa somewhere, maybe Australia, and the FU clause in his contract said he didn't have to redo it once the clueless studio producer signed off on it.*

David Ogden Stiers (complete aside: I can never remember how to spell his last name, so I looked it up. Wikipedia has both "Steirs" and "Stiers", IMDb and the "unofficial David Ogden Stiers website" have "Stiers". So I'm going with "Stiers".) did a great job pronouncing "D'ni" correctly for Dr. Watson's audio in Uru.

When he came to do the voice for Myst V, he wanted Esher to have a harder glottal stop. Rand was ok with Esher's pronunciation. I didn't hear it for quite a while. Rand (knowing how upset I was with the original Catherine's voice in Riven, which contributed to having all of her dialog replaced by Rengin's voice-over) didn't let me hear it right away. And before he did let me hear it, he warned me that I wouldn't like it.

Rand has his own theories for Esher's pronunciation.

I'm sticking with "speech impediment".

😃

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Fri May 19, 2006 1:05 pm   Post subject:

Julian Lapis wrote:

> *You mean to tell me that RAWA didn't voice his own character?*

I "tried out" for Dr. Watson's voice, but I didn't get the part.

Go figure. 😃

Alahmnat wrote:

> *The Community Room in the offline game has a brief, incredibly warbled D'ni speech, which I don't think David Ogden Stiers provided (or maybe he did, I dunno).*

That one's mine with a bit of distortion thrown in.

😃

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

Tokotah and Dakotah

RAWA
Posted: Fri Feb 01, 2013 2:11 am — Post subject:

vidkid7 wrote:

> *I have no idea if Jalak Dador is historically accurate, or if it's just a joke that went wildly out of control, and now I HAVE to know.*
>
> *RAWA signal?*

Yes, this kind of thing happened all the time. It's a side affect of having artists and others who don't speak D'ni working on the projects. :)

Jalak was the Age's D'ni name.
"Jalak Dador" was Ryan Miller's* play on it.

Tokotah - literally means "place of the locked door(s)"
"Dakotah" - Steve Ogden's* play on it

I don't remember "Takotah" being used, but if it was, it was a simple typo, being closer to "Dakotah", the name the artists used for it.

"War Shroom" - Douglas Sharper's play on "War Room".

Tolesa - literally, "sealed place" (i.e. Vault)

Shorah,

RAWA

* attributions should be taken with a grain of salt. It's been a long time, and my memory isn't what it once was. These are the first people I remember using the altered place names, but they may or may not be the ones who originally came up with the alterations.

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

History and Events

Timeline

MercAngel
Posted: Wed May 24, 2006 11:43 pm — Post subject:

Here is some info that may help with when Myst V happened

the year is in D'ni
the year inside the () is our time

94?? - Gehn marries Keta.

9411 (1755)- Birth of Atrus and death of Keta. Gehn leaves for D'ni while baby Atrus stays with Anna.

9417 - Gehn starts writing Riven, his Fifth Age (LÃ-vofo 8).

9425 - Atrus conducts his Battery experiment and blows open the path leading to D'ni. Gehn returns to Anna and takes Atrus to D'ni.

9429 (1773) - Events of Myst: The Book of Atrus: Gehn takes Atrus to D'ni and teaches him writing. Atrus' Kor'fa v'ja (LÃ-vot 22). Gehn traps him in K'vÃ-r. Atrus goes to Riven, meets Katran and traps Gehn in Riven. Atrus, Katran and Anna stay in Myst. The Myst book falls in the fissure and lands on Earth.

9430 - Atrus writes the Rocks, the Age that will be known as Stoneship.

9430? - Achenar is born.

9431 - Atrus marries Katran (LÃ-vosan 13).

9435 - Atrus writes the Everdunes.

9432 - Sirrus is born.

944? - Katran writes Serenia.

9441 (1785) - Death of Anna on Myst Island.

9442 - Atrus writes Osmoian.

944? - Atrus writes Channelwood and Selenitic.

9445 - Atrus writes J'nanin, Voltaic, Edanna, Amateria and Narayan and uses them to teach his sons the principles of the Ages.

9448 - Atrus writes The Tide.

9449 - Atrus writes Mechanical.

c. 9451 - Events of Myst comic: The Book of Black Ships: Sirrus and Achenar meet the Black Pirates of Mechanical and are introduced to tyranny.

9458 - Gehn manages to link to 233rd Age (LÃ-votar 11)

9460 - Atrus writes Rime.

94?? - Civil war in Narayan. Saavedro is trapped on J'nanin.

9461 (1805) - Sirrus and Achenar send Katran to Riven (LÃ-votar 29). Gehn imprisons her (LÃ-bro 8).

9462 (1806) - Sirrus is trapped in Spire; Achenar is trapped in Haven (Leevot 25). Events of Myst: A human finds the Myst book, arrives to Myst and frees Atrus, who then burns the trap books (LÃ-vobro 13) (December 12)

9462, LÃ-vobro 30 - Events of Riven: The Stranger goes to Riven, where he imprisons Gehn and frees Katran. Riven is destroyed. Rivenese relocated to Tay.

9465 - Atrus and Katran enter Averone.

946? - Events of Myst: The Book of D'ni: Atrus finds the D'ni survivors, visits the Age of Terahnee, frees the Relyimah.

9468, LÃ-bot 25 - Atrus decides to write Releeshahn.

9469, LÃ-fo 1 - Atrus begins to write Releeshahn and revisits J'nanin.

9471 - Events of Myst III: Exile: Saavedro steals Releeshahn and traps the Stranger in J'nanin thinking he is Atrus. The Stranger escapes and reclaims Releeshahn.

9480 - Events of Myst IV: Revelation: Atrus writes to the Stranger who then arrives in Tomahna. Yeesha is abducted. Death of Sirrus and Achenar.(Leevobro 2)

9660 (2004) - The events of Uru : D'ni is opened to the public by the DRC. People from the surface visit the Cleft.

We first see Yeesha in Riven so that put Yeesha birth around 1806 our time

We see that Uru takes place in 2004 this make Yeesha in Uru about 198 years old and Atrus about 249 years old.

The other thing is Myst V was not from the view point of the Uru explorers but from the Stranger, as Atrus say old friend and Yeesha also say friend.

RAWA
Posted: Thu May 25, 2006 7:13 pm — Post subject:

MercAngel wrote:

> *We first see Yeesha in Riven so that put Yeesha birth around 1806 our time*

Not to be argumentative, but Yeesha is first seen as a baby in Myst III: Exile. She was born in 1815 by our calendar.

😬

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

Preafter

CrisGer
Posted: Thu Aug 13, 2009 8:50 am — Post subject: **Rand Q and A + Panel: Mysterium 2009 at Cyan**

This is a text transcript of the Rand Q and A and the Panel Discussion at the 2009 Mysterium Town Hall at Cyan HQ in July prepared by Marten and I. We welcome any additions or corrections to this effort and want to thank the Mysterium Committee for continued wonderful work to help keep our community alive, vibrant and evolving with the Myst series and events in the Cavern itself. This was completed to best of our ability from excellent video from Zib and Tomala without whom this would not have been possible, and we much appreciate the wonderful welcome that Rand and all at Cyan gave to our fellow explorers at this event, which shares some very interesting news, information and history of URU, MystOnline URU Live, and the future plans for MystOnline Open Source. Thanks always to Rand and all at Cyan over the years who have brought us this wonderful D'ni Universe and the unfolding story in the Cavern. And Thanks to RAWA for some additional history and corrections below in the responses.

Story, Characters, and Personal Experiences
In Game Characters and Developers of Mystonline URU

Mysterium 2009
Cyan Headquarters, Mead, WA

==

1. "Town Hall"
2. Panel and Rand's Q and A
3. Cyan HQ
4. Mysterium 2009

==

"Town Hall"
Alahmnat (Gary) introduces the town hall .....

I don't know how many of you have been briefed on
exactly what we are going to be doing here, but
basically we are going to be discussing telling stories
within the Myst and URU universe, JD Barnes, Brian
Fioca, Echo McKenzie, and Douglas Sharper are here....
so let me do a few introductions but I need to give
this chair back,..

[Applause]

...so I will let you guys take over from here, because
you know what you are doing better than I do.

Panel from left to right:

"J.D. Barnes" is Blade Hamilton
Brian Fioca is… Brian Fioca
"Douglas Sharper" is Ryan Miller
"Echo McKenzie" is Eleri Hamilton

Blade Hamilton (J.D. Barnes) (Player): I would like to
thank everybody for coming and I would like to take the
chance to thank all the people from Cyan who are here,
both former and present, thank you very much for
hosting us and thank you very much for giving us a
world that we all care about so much that we are
willing to come out in 100 degree heat for, so, thank
you very much.

[Applause for Cyan]

Blade Hamilton (J.D. Barnes): The panel is very open
but we are going to talk about the concept of where
does story fit into the D'ni Universe in general and
Myst and URU and all the different incarnations, and
we're going to start going through the panel with What
do you think is most important about story in D'ni, in

any version of it, book, game, whatever, start from that end and work this way.

Eleri Hamilton (Echo McKenzie)(Player): I think one of the most important things about story is the absolute wealth of material we have to work with, there's so much of it, there's so much detail that you can pretty much go to any point, any resource that Cyan has given us and start working with it and build a story and create ah, aspects of the universe that are your very own so that I think is my, I think is the biggest asset in my view.

Ryan Miller (Douglas Sharper)(Cyan Employee): I would follow that with Depth, the story's Depth, taking from Tolkien, and Lord of the Rings, you've all heard the stories how he created a massive backstory [before] he started actually writing the story... I think that would be one of the things that we tried really hard to do, is create a massive backstory that sometimes you heard, sometimes you didn't, but what that did was solidify the story that you did hear and make it seem more realistic, make it seem more exciting really, just more real and so I would say that the depth was one of the key points, the main highlight of the story for me, for D'ni.

Brian Fioca (Player): I guess extending from Depth, I think one of the unique characters of the story that the Myst universe has is it draws in YOU, all of the Myst stories, the ones that we all know, involve you very personally and specifically, I think that's the key to making it work, I think, landing on Myst Island, and being on Riven, and being in the Cavern, and being part of the groups that formed, and affecting everything in the story, in your own way, actually, that combined with the depth and the breadth, just sort of makes it all affect everybody.....I think that is part of the key of why it works.

Blade Hamilton (J.D. Barnes) (Player): I don't know what more I can add to that, but, yeah, I think it, you know, we talk about Depth, the detail, I would refer to as texture, in a sense that no matter what you actually see, you know, whether it's the books, a machine you see in an Age, whatever, you know that there's something else behind it, there's potentially hundreds of years of history that might be behind it, it's not just story, it's archeology, it's being in a world that's obviously more than, ...you, and it's presented in a very real way, we don't just, you know, here's our dictionary and it's, Okay, Everybody turn to page 25

and it will tell us what it's all about, it's in a sense that, it's presented to us as you can see life, and very often what WE see in it is what we see in it, no matter what the designer had in mind, we add our own attachments, we add our own Depth to it, we add our own meaning, to things that the designer may not have ever even thought of, and I think that's the mark of, a real mark of artwork that we're not willing to... (you say something that means something that other people can mean things with what you did. ???) Ok let's open it up to questions ...

Brian Fioca: I am curious about something, I know that most of the people here on this panel have evolved, everybody here, well most of the people here in some ways, I am curious about how each of us or each of you did it, and, and what are the secrets for getting people to come along into the story you were trying to tell and get them involved in what's going on?

Blade Hamilton (J.D. Barnes): I know that as J.D. Barnes one of the things that I focused on was not actually a sub plot, I focused on personality. J.D. is a person, ...he has history, he has [feelings?], and he interacts with people and that way he became very personal, one of best things that I saw was where I was looking at some for, and people said they really enjoyed talking to me because I responded, I remembered who they were, it was like, Oh, yeah, How's it going? How's the family? That sort of thing. So it was really for me about making those personal connections. And hopefully by the fact that I had some people looking to me, I could make those people become important, trying to mention.....like so and so made some great art ...and that's how he made an expanding connection of influence.

Brian Fioca: I think for me actually it was largely a factor of getting people to go the direction they already wanted to go, I didn't need to know very much about the history of D'ni, or anything - as a matter of fact I didn't - when I was sort of playing my role, it was really easy for me to come into an area and find somebody that wanted to talk about what was going on, and just let them talk, let them talk and then let them get other people involved, and help direct the conversation the way I kind of wanted it to go, and ... just sort of see where it went, and like I think the most successful people in getting the story going in URU and all those sorts of online communities, don't drive too hard, they don't have an agenda, they HAVE an agenda, but they don't drag us along with them, they

let people go in the direction they want to go, they take them there, they sort of open their minds to new things, very gently and see what's going to happen that way ...and the ones that I saw that were NOT successful I think were just too aggressive in trying to force people in the direction they weren't really ready to go down or weren't really interested in, so [Indecipherable].

Ryan Miller (Douglas Sharper): So, first off though I am sitting here for Sharper, I am just the guy that typed the stuff a lot, I represent a team of people obviously, a plan, so we probably came at it with a little different perspective with wanting to get you guys involved so that we didn't have to be on the computer as often, [laughter]... and I mean really we talked about this a lot, like, how do we get ... how do we kind of pass the [he makes air quotation marks] "Celebrity Status" on the players because really there were, there were a few people, characters in the game, Sharper one of them, who kinda got this celebrity status, that was cool coming out with Sharper, now, unlike ...these guys [points to Blade and Eleri] we didn't need to remember names, Sharper wasn't that kind of guy, [laughter], [he] just ignored you anyway, but no, so we kinda wanted to just pass the celebrity virus on to people if you will, and part of that came with Brian and we kinda wanted to create this player who was in the game more than we were and kinda pass it on and say hey, he's .... almost like Sharper being here now and Sharper likes this guy and he's connected with him and he's giving HIM information ... and really at the, really maybe at the foundation of all of this we want information. Which was why Sharper I would say was more of a celebrity because he has information, he's Cyan, he can give you information you can't get otherwise, so everybody wants to talk to him, maybe you will be the person that has got some information, and we wanted to give that out little bits here and there, but really, at the end, we really just wanted to create other celebrities in the game. We started to do that, I am not sure we ever did that completely successfully, but that was kind of the goal.

Eleri Hamilton (Echo McKenzie): Echo started out completely, almost an experiment. I just had this little scene idea in my head and so said "Let's go with it",... she was very evolutionary, she became what people thought she was, so when people started interacting with her and saying "Oh, she does this, oh, she does this, oh she does this" then sometimes she

would do that, sometimes she would, you know..... She really, I mean those of you who are authors or writers, you get it when a character has a mind of their own....you write something and all of a sudden it's like Whoa, she did what? A lot of stuff I just wanted to be there and be present, and interact with people and see what happened and how they would react... she would kind of do her own thing sometimes, sometimes she would just be sitting there, and people would get curious and then it just spread, it spread so much faster than I expected, that all of a sudden everybody was talking about the crazy ghost chick, and then from there it was, Well she is a seer, she is a psychic, well she's this, and I was very careful never to have Echo say any of those things, because that wasn't, that wasn't what she would do, that wasn't like her to say, Oh, yes I'm the cavern seer. But the stories she told, some of them, I made up on the spot, as people were asking me questions, some of them I would do a little bit of research, I do story telling as a hobby anyway, I do oral story telling as a hobby so some of them I would take and adapt, stories I knew I would give them a D'ni flavor, other times it was just, come up with something, so. So that was, just kind of, Echo just being there, being present, She did the you know kind of immersive thing where she acted like she really was in the cavern, but she never gave anybody flak for not doing it, but it would spread a little bit that she was being like that to other people, and would respond like that, so it was a little [Indecipherable] that way.

Dadguy: Can we ask questions?

Blade Hamilton (J.D. Barnes): Oh yeah, please.

Dadguy: This is for Sharper, I was curious, if while you were doing your thing in the game, if you had a team there where you were sort of discussing what they wrote and wanted to do and whatnot, and how did you choose these celebrities? I mean how did you find, that guy you took hunting with you...

Ryan Miller (Douglas Sharper): Rils.

Dadguy: Rils? I mean, did you look around for a days and try to find someone who was very active and personable, likable maybe, ... and then, who pulled the trigger and said ...that's the guy right there..?... And then, of course he could decline to be part of it, I suppose... How did that happen?

Ryan Miller (Douglas Sharper): Well for the first question, the team, sometimes we would have a team,

sometimes it would just be me, because we had talked about it enough, and that kind of gets back to the Depth, and...how Eleri was saying, we knew who Sharper was, he was a character, when you got into Sharper, start to know what he would say, how he would act, his backstory, his parents, all of this stuff we would talk about it and where we want to kinda take it, so most of time it would just be me and RAWA would come by and whatever, unless it was a big story, major point in the story, when we really needed to hash it out perfectly which was pretty rare. As far as Brian, I don't remember...

Brian Fioca: I remember actually, it is a really disappointing story, I was in the city like the third day that I was there, like really early on after Prologue opened, and Sharper was in the city looking for people who recognized him, and [looks at Ryan-Sharper] and you were basically saying, 'Does anybody know who I am?' So I was, Oh, I remember you from the Journal... so I started talking, and the DRC came up and, I was like yeah it's a shame that they are blocking us off, we should revolt, and Sharper was like, Yeah! and then we talked a little more and the next thing I knew, I came back on a few hours later and like four people were looking for me saying Sharper decided that they needed to talk to me about a revolution, so from then on it was like 20 hour days straight.

Ryan Miller (Douglas Sharper): Now that does sound very random but again, once we were in there as Sharper, I mean it all makes sense, you're kind of playing the Sharper character, this guy comes along, oh you recognize me, hey, we should do a revolution? Yeah, we should. It just kind of goes from there, so again, from the Depth and the character of him...there were certain people that would fit, it just ... oh this person would work with Sharper, this person is kinda underground, maybe not everybody knows him and maybe he's got some harsh feelings towards the DRC or whatever.... this person obviously doesn't fit, so it's weird how those characters kinda take on their own role, when you're in there and the game is happening you find people that are attracted to Sharper that would work with him and it just kind of takes off on its own

Brian Fioca: He stayed in character, the whole time he was asking me if I trusted people, that he would go to and like "mini-celebritize" them and it was all kinda on my shoulders to make sure that they were okay ....and I only did a good job on that part of the time...

Blade Hamilton (J.D. Barnes): How about Rils? On the expedition to Negilahn? How'd you pick Rils?

Ryan Miller (Douglas Sharper): I, sorry, before I came here I was going over old notes, to try to remember half of this stuff, I don't remember the exact way that I found Rils, does anybody ? RAWA?

RAWA: He wanted to go out and look and see, he wanted to go out of the pod and wanted to tell what was happening out there.

Ryan Miller (Douglas Sharper): So he came to us kinda of thing.

Eleri Hamilton (Echo McKenzie): He was doing the D'ni Zoological Society....

Ryan Miller (Douglas Sharper): Oh that's right...

Eleri Hamilton (Echo McKenzie): ...was an expedition to see the animals...

Blade Hamilton (J.D. Barnes): And Rils is actually a biologist in real life...

Ryan Miller (Douglas Sharper): We did find that out quickly, in talking to him ... so again just in the game Sharper goes in to the game just like you guys find friends or people you mesh with, that you would go on an adventure with, I mean Sharper became this character, we're in there and Sharper, people come up to him, they are drawn to his character, just like you find friends, he finds friends, it works and we go make those friends celebrities and whatever. Take it from there.

Blade Hamilton (J.D. Barnes): Do we have any questions? Or if not, open...

Simon_Bitdiddle: I have a question. Now, Scars...there's a rumor that there was a player that lost track that URU was just a game ... they were calling for somebody to go down and rescue, somebody call the police, somebody get some rescuers down there... essentially, how does that type of level of interaction kind of change the way the story feels, does that make you think you need to limit it back, or is that something you are actually shooting for?

[Panel members discuss amongst themselves]

Brian Fioca: I don't remember that specific case, but I had to deal with a lot of those, people who would come in and are, just so lost in it, they feel like they are part of it, I couldn't tell whether they were being

serious or not, actually if they [were] thinking that it was real or just trying to get so much recognition that they were just really selling it hard, and it's challenging because people... I'm not sure I don't remember this specific case...you guys?

Simon_Bitdiddle: Oh, that was for Scars, during the actual time when they were trapped, there two girls were trapped and the Bahro, apparently, and people were trying to tell her, or tell the people that were still down there to draw signs for water, draw [Indecipherable], try to get the Bahro to recognize them and release them.

Eleri Hamilton (Echo McKenzie): I think I remember that somebody was a little, do we need to call the police, do we need to… you know...

Brian Fioca: I think that some people like, just lose touch, and they are not, I mean that's fine but you kinda of have to manage them in a different way, because they could easily disrupt what is going on for everybody. You don't want somebody in there who is going to ruin everybody else's fun because this is not good. And you don't want to make a scene so you kind of have to sort of do what you can to manage it, I have had a few times where I have had to, I mean it was me and Sharper actually in a situation where someone had come up and kind of started to try to dominate the scene, like there was story trying to unfold, and we just had to try to play them down or distract them in some other way so that they wouldn't.... it sounds mean but we were trying to make sure that everybody else had fun and... it was a challenging situation, we had to be sensitive... but you also have to make sure that everybody else was involved.

Eleri Hamilton (Echo McKenzie): Its really a fine line being able to do story and interact with people in a place that supposed to be real, and it's real people sitting there, and it's real people playing themselves, being themselves and in some cases being a little tangential from themselves, and still understanding that it's a game, but it's still real people and because it's very personal... when you go into World of Warcraft, you're playing an orc, you're playing [Indecipherable], you're consciously stepping outside of yourself, in URU you are still yourself, and so that line between just a game and virtual reality is very, very blurry, which I think was really good in that with Scars, it hit everybody like a ton of bricks. Nobody was left unaffected by Scars, you could sit there and

go, it's just a game, this is all characters, but you were still feeling it, and I think that was kind of a hallmark of the potential that was there, to have that sort of, we can sit there in our heads and go this is just a game but our hearts are going, oh my god.... somebody just died and I just watched it happen.

Blade Hamilton (J.D. Barnes): I think that sort of connection is great, well, once again, a lot of people in that community have commented about the fanatical nature of Myst fans.......but it is fact that it is not just we being invested in the story ourselves, we have become part of the story, URU is more than just than, for a lot of people than just a couple of games, it's a community, it's why we are here, several of us come to Mysterium every year ...we can talk the same language, whether it's English or D'ni, you know, that sort of thing...once we get around these people, feelings can get hurt because we can feel things that ordinarily we wouldn't, but at the same time, it allows us to make connections that we normally wouldn't make.

Eleri Hamilton (Echo McKenzie): I remember a specific instance where I actually in cavern, as Eleri, yelled at Vid, in cavern, [makes mock yelling noises]... I just chewed, it was when he was sneaking into the city, when it was supposed to be closed off, I just chewed him out, up one side, down the other... I get an IM on the DRC forums, a couple of days later, he said, "I am so sorry!"... I go "It's in cavern... you're fine, I'm not mad at you at all, really, I'm sorry I didn't communicate that clearly, before I started yelling at you... I should have IM'd... hindsight being what it is, I should have IM'd him and said, "Going IC now! Trust me!", so he would have been warned, because he thought I was really mad at him and he was hurt and he was upset and he felt bad and then I was hurt because I'd upset a friend very deeply, so... I did it to greydragon once too, messaged him and said, "Whatever I say in Cavern is not what I am thinking, trust me."

Crowd: What's done in the Cavern, stays in the Cavern.

[Laughter]

Ryan Miller (Douglas Sharper): I just want to say from our perspective, I mean we created this cool experiment and this hideous experiment at times. I don't know if you have heard of the Stanford prisoner experiment, in the 70's they took college students and within two days friendly college students who are playing prison guards are beating friendly college students who were being prisoners, who are organizing a revolt and I mean this

is what happens to humans when you are put in a new situation and surrounded by an environment that is different, you suddenly start to take on these roles, and so it does speak to URU that this became more than a game, it was an environment in which we lived, that part of it was really cool except for when it did leak out of the cavern and we seeing on forums people whose feelings were really hurt or who were angry with us or they were angry with each other, as the creators of this game that was not really what we want, for people to be mad at each other in real life. So, I am not sure that we ever really had time to figure all that out ... the experiment. We LOVED that everyone got so involved, we tried to be real careful and didn't sometimes especially with Sharper and stuff that went on there, you know, we got people mad and ticked off at us and angry, at even the whole Wheely thing, we, people got really involved and so we were always finding, man, it's so cool how involved everyone is, but also let's remember this is a game, and that's about games in general. I remember we were at a conference in Boston, with a lot of game designers, and there was a whole session on people saying, you know, we are hearing, people playing online games, and the babies screaming in the background, and its like oh well, hold on a second I gotta kill this dragon first, and while the baby is screaming ...and I'm not cool with that, most people weren't, so there's some responsibility in creating something like URU, and I think we were trying to figure that out, and then if you were angry with us or you ended up hating your friend, please forgive us.

Eleri Hamilton (Echo McKenzie) and Blade Hamilton (J.D. Barnes): Any more questions? Any questions?

Marten: For each of you, what moment in the story was the best moment for you and what moment was your greatest disappointment?

Blade Hamilton (J.D. Barnes): You were doing great until that "and", Marten.

Eleri Hamilton (Echo McKenzie): Do you mean specifically URU or... the mythos as a whole, or as we were playing our characters?

Marten: Let's narrow it down to the characters. The involvement of the characters. For those characters, what was your most shining moment and what was your most disappointing moment?

Eleri Hamilton (Echo McKenzie): My favorite moment was linking into the Cavern one day and having somebody

walk up to me and say, tell me a story. That was it. That right there. And then starting and having a crowd gather. Not because it was a crowd but because it was people wanting to hear. And one of the things that I did with Echo...was wanting to tell the stories of D'ni as it was, was something that was dear to me as a person, there's so much of D'ni, you know we're always running around in this desolate Cavern, and Echo could see it filled with people, alive, and with a living thriving community and that's what she wanted to share, with everybody else, so having somebody come and say, tell me a story, tell me a story about how D'ni was, was amazing ... and then I sat and went, "[expletive] now I need to come up with a story!...Okay!!"

[Crowd laughs]

Eleri Hamilton (Echo McKenzie): And it ended up being a pretty good one! But, so that was [makes panicked motions] "Okay, here, let me go AFK (away from keyboard), listen to the stones..." ... Echo going AFK was me going "Okay what am I going to do?" Worst moment for me, I got a lot of insults, I let them roll of my back a lot, but there was a part that was like, I could see, almost a contingent, not a contingent of people but this mood among some people of, "she's just insane, she's crazy, we really should just make fun of her all the time, and I was worried about that growing because I didn't want that to take away from the stories she was telling, I didn't want this idea that she was a seer or a psychic, or however she was getting the stories I was afraid of that overrunning the stories she actually had to tell.

Ryan Miller (Douglas Sharper): The highlight for me was, I don't know if - it wasn't really Sharper directly, but I mix them all up because we were in on all of them, was the whole Wheely thing, I remember we were all, and Rand back there, Carl was here, I remember we were all in the QA department, that night, I think the bahro came, and was, I don't remember if it was when they captured Wheely? But I just remember we were all walking around getting chilled, and we were reading what everyone was saying it was like man, this is so cool this is working, people are emotionally engaged in this story big time, just like we wanted them to be, and they were they were eating it up and we were eating it up. We were like, this, man, this is what this game can be, and Wheely had built up to this moment, we had a dramatic conclusion, we had props that fed the story, we had stuff written out, it was probably our most planned out story as well which was probably why it

came off the best, or at least in my opinion, but that was the moment where I think for most of us, correct me if I am wrong, we were just, that was exciting ....and this could be so cool if we could dedicate this amount of time and content to everything in the game, this would be an amazing story all the time.....

Rand Miller: By the way.....that was about a year in preparation, we put people into the cavern, Karen my daughter, played Wheely, a year before .... To me, she had no agenda, other than just go around and make friends and be herself as Wheely, a year or more before anything happened, so it was a long, long part in there, so that even made it more, drawing to a close was huge, you see the potential.

Blade Hamilton (J.D. Barnes): One of the comments I saw on the forum right after the death of Wheely, someone was like "I was just talking to her, we took her through Kadish Tolesa, we were friends,.... [sobs]" ... horrified... it was a character, everybody knew but still...well, that's real to me... so...

Brian Fioca to Ryan Miller (Douglas Sharper): How about worst?

Ryan Miller (Douglas Sharper): Worst? [thinks for a moment] Try to ah, remember here, I don't know, I don't know, do we have a worst?

Rand Miller: To me, Ryan and I are like only one person in the game, we would do stuff, we talked a lot about it, it would seem, a lot like, in my mind, our inability to, to, really give a celebrity thing to get that balance right, to try to get people who, to engage in the game but we weren't sure how to pass the torch of celebrity and then people started to get mad and ...."You're not you're not part of that," I mean you guys talked about the same thing, "No, I am" but "No, you're not", you would give out information and they would [Indecipherable], and sometimes you didn't have the information (to give out)... how do you do this? And we were trying to juggle, figure it out at the same time and got kind of disappointed. We started something and would think it would work and then it would fall and we ripped it down.

[Attempts to get Rand to come sit at the front are unsuccessful]

Brian Fioca: [the most exciting thing for me]...I was mainly involved in Prologue, would be the Guild Hall collapse where Phil disappeared, aka died, aka whatever ... that was so well put together, so

coordinated, all of the characters were there, it was cool, there was so much interaction between the population at large and the characters, and the environment... like when the Guild Hall actually collapsed it was a physical effect, it actually happened, you could see it and it was so amazing to have all the energy going and people kind of arguing about what's going on and all of a sudden there is proof, okay wow those guys are right, and I'm sitting there saying what did you do to me, you've been saying that you can do this the whole time, and now Phil's gone what am I doing to do and Kodama is laughing at me, that was quite a highlight to me, it was just the culmination of a lot of stuff.

Brian Fioca: A disappointing thing for me actually was not really a story thing, it was sort of like my own kind of folly, Ryan (Sharper) was talking about the prison guard experiment and one of those cases was when Sharper came to me after we had some secret meetings and one of the people that was in the secret meetings went and told Engberg about some things that we were talking about in the secret meetings, things about blackmailing the DRC members, something like that, which of course was supposed to be really secret because we were supposed to be the good guys, which we were.

[Crowd laughs]

Brian Fioca: And so, so Sharper comes to me and says, "Yeah, about that, You need to take care of this, he needs to be dealt with," and kind of left it at that. He said, "It is your job to deal with him," and like, that was pretty open ended, but the way he said it... it was like really late at night and I had been playing real long, so I was kind of hazy, and so I immediately found him. He was in the city, I went in there, and in front of the entire full city I berated him for a long period of time, just totally discredited him, made him look like a idiot in front of everybody there, like I was really mean to this guy in a way that I feel bad about to this day. I publicly ousted him and everything. And he sent me an e mail later saying, "You know I have never really cried because of a video game before."

[Crowd makes Awwww sounds]

Brian Fioca: And but then he said, "I figured out what you did, and in retrospect it was awesome and I am really glad to have been a part of it, but... that was really intense." So like for me, that's kind of like wow, did I really do that? I mean, it was me, like, I

am using my real name, and people were posting on forums like, this guy is evil, ...my mom can Google this and see "Brian..."... it was it was a really tricky thing, but it was a lot of fun.

Ryan Miller (Douglas Sharper): That is now my biggest disappointment. Because I told him to do it. I'm sorry.

Blade Hamilton (J.D. Barnes): My best experience, I had a lot of really good experiences with this character, I had lot of fun, it came at a time when I had been laid off so it became kind of, here was my way to be part of something, and this is a story that I have heard from a lot of people, that URU became that thing that got them through whatever thing was going on at the time (in their lives), so I had a lot of good experiences, I think my absolute favorite one was when I walked in, as J.D. I used to wander around, and I walked into the Beginner's Bevin and there was a ResEng orientation meeting and he said and you should talk to J.D. if you want to know about some stuff... and I go, ah ah ah.... "Why thank you very much.... I appreciate it" [turns and makes gasping noise]... it was just off the cuff... that was a compliment, that was a big thing. Just to know that, what I had done there had been noticed.

Blade Hamilton (J.D. Barnes): I think the most disappointing part, there was, the fact was that... you begin to see the potential for these stories starting to really gear up, Echo was starting to catch on.... people were starting to show some interest in the Lara Documents and that sort of thing... and then when URU was shut down... we had all these stories ready and now we don't know what to do with them, and... I think the most disappointing thing was that everyone had that feeling, we care so much and we don't know what to do, and we all went in different directions and that sort of thing, and so there are a lot of stories that I want to see and I want to hear from people that people talked about... [Gives examples of some story ideas he'd heard]... I hope that someday it will all come back together and people will be able to tell their stories again, whether it's on the Open Source, or Myst Online or Second Life, or forums, or whatever,

Eleri Hamilton (Echo McKenzie): I think there is still a huge amount of room for us to be telling stories, and for us to be sharing stories......like the work Marten does with his videos, those are stories that he tells, the artwork that people do, the work that the DLF does, we may not have the space of URU to go tramping around in right now, we may not have that for months, years,

who knows, but all of that information about D'ni is still out there and we still have those seeds, to grow our own stories and I think it is important that we keep doing that, because it's the heart of D'ni, it's the mythos of D'ni, it's the stories of D'ni that brought us all together in the first place, and I think that's what's going to keep the community woven together... it's continuing to share our stories, about ourselves, about things we are interested in D'ni, or outside of D'ni, that's, we're a part of that mythology now, and to be a part of a living mythology like that is an incredible gift that Cyan gave us, it's an absolute gift. Most people don't get a chance to be part of a living, growing, dynamic mythology. It's something we read in books, it's something we watch on the screen. And we were alive in that. And I think we can sustain that even without the Virtual World to go running around in, and that's what I'd like to see happen.

Blade Hamilton (J.D. Barnes): [Asks for more questions]

Questioner: Is there still room in this great environment for what I would call a true neutral, ah, because...yeah, you're laughing, [points at someone on the panel] that was one of the things that I tried when I was dealing with Scars... I refuse to be involved in any of this, my concern is actually right around me right now [gestures around the room]...end of story... and ... pardon me [clears throat], and ah, where can one go in that environment, do you have to end up stepping away... [Indecipherable]

Brian Fioca: I think I have a perspective on this, I was ... when I was involved, the neutrals were an interesting group because my goal was to try get people involved in one direction or another, vilify me or get behind me, that sort of thing, and the people that were saying, I don't want to be involved with this, like stay away from me, that was fine, I respected that and I tried to avoid certain places so that I wouldn't politicize things, or just come in and barge into groups...but, I think though that, that's a big part of it, in terms of moving the story along, I had trouble with people who just didn't want to interact with the story because like we wanted to go somewhere, we wanted to take you somewhere, and maybe there were two sides there, maybe there were three, maybe there were none, but there were, there were trends and currents going on and we wanted to take you along with those currents and see where we ended up and the more we get involved the more fun it is, and the people who just didn't want to

be involved in it, just to appreciate the environment, totally respect that, it's a beautiful environment, puzzles and game, but we wanted to make it into something more living and alive and its a shame that we kind of came across wrong to some people, I think but I think there should always be a place for people like that ...to interact, part of the big thing about URU was, it was a big chat room, really it was, we sat around and talked, like what do we do here, and, that shouldn't be taken away, at all. I think that is really important, and it should, like for me, when I was done being in the story... I took breaks by just going out to different Ages with people and just talking, and that's important, and I think we need that, but so that's my perspective. It's kind of a complicated balance.

Blade Hamilton (J.D. Barnes): I think in terms of how you enjoy URU and how you enjoy the story, of course, there's puzzles, there's background...and then there's community, you don't have to be part of the story, it's not... it is always there, and the other parts are always there too, so if that's not your thing, if you don't want to get, if you're not interested in what this faction might be saying or that faction might be saying, there is enough in URU to not, to not worry about that. , but when you get into the story, no one's true neutral, there is no such thing, everyone has an opinion, even... even everyone who has an idea of who they're avoiding... life is dynamic, people take sides, sometimes people take the wrong side, sometimes they take the right side, sometimes people take sides that don't do anything... but when you're there and the story immerses, there's always your side. At the very least. So... there's no such thing as a true neutral, and there's no such thing as a true neutral party.

Ryan Miller (Douglas Sharper): I don't know... I mean, to say that much more, it's the same... for people who wanted to get involved in the story, it was there, and we wanted to make it... exciting and engaging and emotional, for people who didn't, great, enjoy the environment, ah, for a time the story was, and this was because of all the situations, it was the thing keeping it going, we weren't adding environments, like we had wanted to, so the story was kind of the thing, keeping people I would say to a large degree, excited about the game, but again, neutral parties, honestly everybody would have liked to have explored more as well, we were kind of beginning to establish sides, you know, neutral

parties and it would have been great to see where it goes.....

Blade Hamilton (J.D. Barnes): A final few words from everybody.....before we go ...

Eleri Hamilton (Echo McKenzie): Keep thinking, seriously, you know, keep thinking about this sort of thing, keep dreaming, that's what keeps us glued together, is that we all share this common thread of loving Myst and Cyan and D'ni and URU and Riven and Exile... it's our Foundation and as long as we keep with that then we're together.

Ryan Miller (Douglas Sharper): Not to get too cheesy here, but, I, the URU story was really cool but ah, I'm way more concerned about real stories and real life, and you all have a real story, we all do, we're all making real stories, I would encourage you to learn from the URU story about the stories that matter, what do you take from that, from interaction with neutral, with evil, with good, I mean that's always, at least my point, I don't think we always just wanted to make a video game, we wanted to make a video game that made people think, and that mattered, affected the real story, to a degree, otherwise we're just making cheap entertainment and that's, that doesn't excite me. So, it's amazing to me that all of these stories in here came from the URU story, that alone makes me feel pretty awesome. And that we did a successful thing because it's amazing that you guys all like each other and even come here year after year or go somewhere year after year, because of a virtual story and the virtual story enables you to connect on a real level and enables you to get into each other's stories in a real world and that matters to me. So I would encourage you to, ya, keep dreaming, keep doing cool URU stuff but also just, to keep creating your story in your life and get involved in other people's stories, on a real life basis, that's what really matters to me.

Brian Fioca: I'm similar to that. I found for me that the story of URU actually sort of enhanced my real life, the way I interacted with people taught me a lot about who I was and what I could do in the real world. I learned from URU some skills that actually I use today in business, getting people excited about things, that is such a useful skill, like telling a story is you taking people on a ride with you, and getting them excited about the things that you are, and that is so valuable, and personal interaction in the real life and I gained so much from having that opportunity, and the

story enhanced my life by bringing me to my wife who is here today, and ah, so I owe a lot to the story of URU and the world that was built here.

Blade Hamilton (J.D. Barnes): Ah, good time to think, ah, I really dislike the phrase "just a game" because, URU, and Myst, they are games but obviously there's more there, ah, just like there's more to [Indecipherable]... there's lots of stories to expand on .... so keep expanding. And to those people who... [Indecipherable] URU, fanfic, videos... keep doing it, don't stop, take risks... because I don't see [Indecipherable]. And if you don't I'll be mad at you.

[Crowd laughs]

Blade Hamilton (J.D. Barnes): So go for it.

Presentation of Wet Floor Sign

Presented to Rand ("Bob the Janitor") by K'laamas

K'laamas:.... and it was always kinda in the back of my head, just kind of as a "what if" and I kind of worked it out, so, Rand, ... [presents the Falling Man wet floor sign with text in D'ni to Rand]

Rand Miller: I keep thinking this needs to be referred to Falling Man instead of Mysterium, so like, ah.... that's cool, that's Awesome! I am going to have to figure out where to put that.

[Rand is obviously VERY pleased and touched.]

RAND Q and A

Rand Miller: ...and if you know me, you know that I always give away too much information too...

Crowd member: No such thing.

Rand Miller: and I am feeling especially generous so whatever you want to know, just let me know.

Simon_Bitdiddle: Are we re-opening the cavern?

Rand Miller (pointing at someone else): Yes?

Questioner: At Cyan isn't the Resident (Restoration) Engineers' job officially the worst job in the company?

Rand Miller: The residents?

Questioner: [Indecipherable]

Rand Miller: Oh my gosh, no. I can't really answer that but I think that employees strive to be residents.

[Lots of crowd talking]

Mysteriuma13 (?): I have a game question, It took me three years to beat Revelations, it was slowed by computer problems, but I have to ask, What were you thinking when you created Spire because that area was terrible, in the prison age, and I remember sitting in (Sirrus') chair going, "what were you, what, no, no!" because I just thought it was the worst prison age in the world...

Rand Miller:..... It was probably, you know, the one that was the most thought out and the best before it was ever built. It is funny because some of those later games... Myst, we threw it together, right? Like we drew it on paper and we had this instinctive feel that felt good to us and, and with Revelation, it was, I specifically remember, it was a huge, huge production, we weren't quite as involved, but I remember UbiSoft saying, we have tested everything in this game, over and over with people, the puzzles are perfect, everything is perfect and I'm thinking "Cool!" and then I was playing part of it, the very first part with Atrus saying.... "A little higher, a little lower" [Rand motions up and down] .... and I am thinking... Did you test THAT ONE? It's the first puzzle and even I don't want to play anymore. Anyway, Next?

Questioner: I am fascinated by psychology, which is one of the reasons that the MYST games are amazing to me...

Rand Miller: I agree...

Questioner: ...there's a lot of psychology involved, and one of the things I was wondering, two questions actually, both regarding Atrus, first was, I got the impression through Catherine's Revelations Journal and from the Rime Journal that Atrus was somewhat neglectful to the boys when they were growing up, is that true? Or am I just reading into things?

Rand Miller: No, no, that's true, yeah, I think that... caused... some of the problems, yeah.

Questioner: and I also wondered how much does, Atrus' response as a neglectful parent, how much does that have to do with a reaction to Gehn's parenting, or "parenting" [Questioner makes inclusive motion] as the case may be?

Rand Miller: I think it's ... I've got to reach back to the story, and [glances to other staff] Ryan probably

can help with this too, it was, that was always part of
the flow, was that Atrus had issues, he'd been raised
by his grandmother and his father had been missing for
a lot of years, and he becomes, history in some ways,
repeats itself, with his boys and here he is intent on
certain things but he misses the point of his own
family and causes further distress so yeah you picked
on something that we thought was a thread and that
flowed through there and also we thought that with
Yeesha in particular the tide changed and finally it
was like hit in the head with a two by four, and like
what am I doing, and everything got put into Yeesha,
which shows up in her character, I mean she's really
quirky and has issues but it was never from neglect,
she was, she got everything that her mother and father
had to offer, which is what we wanted.

Questioner: Did Atrus ever tell Yeesha why the boys
were imprisoned?

Rand Miller: Did Atrus ever tell Yeesha... [looks at
ceiling] I could make something up, but [laughter] I
don't think that parts been written necessarily, ...I
don't know....

Rand Miller (to RAWA): RAWA? Did Atrus ever tell Yeesha
why the boys were imprisoned?

RAWA: I am sure he did.....

Rand Miller: Yep, sat her down and said, here's the
story dear, I was a bad father and now I'm better,
something like that .... just DON'T TOUCH that
book! Okay, next!

Questioner: Are you ever going to write about Sirrus
and Achenar's past?

Rand Miller: No.

Questioner: Why?

[Someone in crowd asks for the question to be repeated]

Rand Miller: Are we ever going to write about Sirrus
and Achenar's past...probably not. There's too many
cool things moving forward [makes circular motion with
right arm], if we do it, it would be very light, but I
think we tried that in comic books, and [looks at
RAWA]...yeah, so we probably won't, we have some cool
things moving forward, the story that excites us is the
one moving forward, that kind of went from URU on and
we didn't get to tell because there was.... COOL STUFF!
that someday might be fun to ....put somewhere... [Big
Smile] Go ahead. [pointing to new questioner]

Marten: Any progress with the Book of Marrim?

Rand Miller: Any progress? You know someday we are going to get that thing going....

[Laughter]

Rand Miller: Have I mentioned it's a great story and we want to do it right and bla bla bla bla bla?... and yeah, at this point we're... we don't have a lot of resources to pull it off but yeah, we still hold out hope. We have actually a LOT of projects that we think are really cool, and that's in our list of really cool projects that we don't necessarily have time or money to pull off but that one's close to all of us, we love that book and that story that are there waiting to be told so, but no progress to answer your question directly, instead of beating around the bush, ...Anyone else?

Questioner: What are your feelings about the potential for the movie about the Book of Atrus?

Rand Miller: [correcting] Yeah, the Book of Ti'ana, I am really excited, its been a really cool thing, we, ok, so, lets see, this is one that's fun to tell a little bit, we see all these crazy games being made into movies, like what, you are making THAT game into a movie? What is wrong...[Indecipherable] ... we have novels and stories, you know, and you pick that????

Rand Miller: So anyway, you know the Mysteriacs, right? You know, I am getting my mystery-somethings confused... the Mysteriac guys sent us their stuff years and years ago, they had done a lot of work and I think you saw on that note I wrote on the website whatever that was a year or so ago, it was, that was exciting for us, let's do this grass roots, let's not go to Hollywood and ....whatever [makes a dismissing motion] let's see if grassroots-wise, we can make connections and let's these guys do this, and the main way I think that things get done is passion and those guys are real passionate and frankly, we're not real connected and we get kinda tired and I'm kinda old in case you didn't notice... [holds up pony tail] I am holding onto the last bits of brown hair that I have, riight there... I'm losing it fast, so that younger passionate generation, and stuff they have and story to tell, like Let's Do it, and there's a lot of hurdles you jump over and lot of things that they had to accomplish, and just recently, within the last month or two, they started making all kinds of connections and finished a screenplay kind of stuff, and Myst came out on iPhone,

which got a lot more buzz going because it kinda did good and they got some inroads to present what they had done to people who could actually help them get movies done and the only thing lacking was the official "option" and I don't even know how Hollywood works on all of this, but at some point they were like, can we have the option on this, and we were like....oh, What's that? [Rand makes open hands motion].. Okay! ....

Rand Miller: And no, they said, we can't just say okay! We have to sign papers and stuff ....Okay! Papers... So we talked about it and it involves trust in both directions, but frankly I would rather work on trust than contracts, because it is only as good as the trust anyway, so I'd rather sign, I'd rather work on trust with somebody I trust than sign an 800 page contract with somebody I don't, so we let them have it. Basically we gave them an option for like a dollar and said, Okay, it's yours, lets see if we can make it happen. So they officially are the keepers of the Book of Ti'ana, they've got the Screenplay that they wrote, they've got some nice connections that they've made, some thru fans, some through just the interweb, people saying I know somebody here and here, and Oh I played Myst back in the day and what kind of a movie were you thinking, it's like Oh, no, there's a book, we have a screenplay, here it is, got a package and so, they are in the process now of officially doing that, saying we have the option, let's go, so we're right at that cusp where somebody could go, Okay, cool we want it, let's do it, and then it sits in development hell for another seven years or something like that, ...or not. But this is the best way I can think of to get it done, so, Yeah, we're Excited.

Questioner: So do you want a part in the movie?

Rand Miller: Of course I WILL be Atrus!

Questioner: [Indecipherable]

Rand Miller: I figure, we've been talking it over with my daughters and family, it's like, I'll probably have a cameo in the coffee shop or ...maybe I can say something like ... "Bring me the doughnuts" or something.

[Laughter and applause]

Rand Miller: ....Better be somebody handsome who plays Atrus, that's all I can say. [Big Smiles] Oh, you know who I want to play Atrus? Somebody brought this up, I want that guy on Lost, ...[snaps fingers] Faraday...that's his name? He's cool, that guy is cool.

I love that character. He's kind of got just enough geek in him...[Rand makes twirly motions with his hand] Sweet. Okay next, in the back....

Mesnab: Speaking of future and on the cusp, and open is there any information about Open Source and where that is going....????

Rand Miller: I can't ....

Someone yells: Vid says is it MORE yet???

Rand Miller: What's that?

Eleri: Vid says is it MORE yet?

Rand Miller: We ah, we, lets see here, we're rolling down the, ah, I'll make a story out of this... We're chugging down the open source path because we don't really have anything else to do, and we're hoping for things to do because we've laid off people we don't have any income and we need kind of money and then this other deal came in where people said well hey, we'd kind of like you to use your engine and do this stuff for us, and suddenly Mark DeForest who was the engineer of the Open Source Train, choo choo -[makes pulling whistle cord motion], suddenly got involved in other things and we have our plans laid of what we need to do, and some of it is just technical, we'll pull certain things out that are, that we've licensed that we can't just let the public use and we have to, we have plug ins that we have to be careful with letting out, and we've got a plan about how to do it but suddenly Mark DeForest was engaged in money-bringing-in-work so that took priority, so we still have no other plans other than to do Open Source and like to move it out there, this time we are thinking we want to do something a little different... boy its been a while since we did all of this ..but it's... we'd like to run the server, or run servers, and, but still have Open Source where people are able to build stuff and adjust stuff but we'd be more the keeper of it and see where that goes, 'cause it seemed like that might be a cool way to do it that way, we'd keep things going but its still passing thru a filter, but anyway that's the plans, and as soon as really we run out of work we will get back on that.

[Audience laughter]

Questioner: A follow-up question. Are you planning on releasing the server code and the engine code separately so you could just run URU and (plug) another engine into it, or does it have to be together?

[Crowd murmuring]

Rand Miller: I think it is a fit together kind of thing, and some of that is, we, I mean, OK so, we planned for the future we've opened it up where, all of this is this weird parallel with the D'ni universe (Dunny) where we want whoever wants to be a writer to be a writer, and at the same time there is like these you know Master Writers who we like to think of ourselves as, who potentially like could make new books that we could add in that might be income producing but keeping it all together and letting you guys write stuff that could be fun to experiment with and potential for us to stick a book in and it would be like, oh, cool, that continues the story ...it seems like a cool way to do that, so, I think we are planning on keeping things tightly tied together.

Eric: Can I have a raise?

[Audience laughs and applauds]

Rand Miller: [jokingly] You're fired. ..... I should have done that more subtle-like. "Eric, there's something I need to talk to you about, would you come into my office?"

K'laamas: Six years ago here I asked you what you thought of Exile and you said you liked it but you hadn't finished it. Three years ago you said you had finished it but you hadn't finished Revelation, have you finished playing Revelation yet?

Rand Miller: No. [laughing]

K'laamas: FAIL!

Rand Miller: I never got past the Atrus part... seriously I couldn't stand hearing myself saying that stuff. I remember recording it... I didn't even know what, necessarily what the game was and they had me in the sound room like reading these things and I'm thinking, Okay, Less Frequency a little higher frequency, little Louder, a little quieter, whatever it was....[makes flapping motions] lower, higher, lower...oh my gosh... and then when I got to that part, I couldn't stand hearing myself....somebody get me past this....

Blade Hamilton: I have a question... have you ever had something you thought was really cool in one of the games that the fans never really picked up on?

Rand Miller: Now that's a great question, yes. Tons of stuff but unfortunately I can't remember it right now...but mostly not puzzle related stuff as much as story related stuff, like we would throw stuff out

there story wise, thinking the fans would, because the
hive mind works in Mysteriumous ways, once the hive
mind latches onto something it is like a done deal
[makes close wave motion], you guys dissect it, you
know chomp chomp chomp, and spit it out, you know, but
sometimes getting the hive mind to understand, you have
to latch on here that was ...and to be honest with you,
it's because there is so much noise, that you guys
never know what is a red herring, what is random, what
is ...information that might actually mean something,
the MOST FUN thing that took the longest for the hive
mind was the Mysterium in New Mexico, that we thought
you guys would completely just disintegrate that, we
thought somebody would pick it up because there were
bill boards and newspapers and stuff .... and [makes
wind blowing across motions] all we heard was the
desert wind. So that was kind of funny. And there were
other little things, yeah, I wish I had time to think
about those, RAWA do you remember..... right now he is
saying: DONT TELL EM about the billboard .... [laughs]
for Heavens sake, ZANDI was AT Mysterium in New Mexico,
ZANDI was THERE! In flesh and blood! What's it take you
people????

Crowd: We guys like the random things we don't get the
obvious...

Questioner: When you have a chance can you come up with
a Rand's Game list kind of thing, in a kind of a list?

Rand Miller: You mean things that you missed?

Questioner: Ah yea.

Rand Miller: [holds head] I don't have time! [smile]
Ah , if something comes to mind I will jot it down, but
actually what I need to do is do that concurrently,
because stuff that is gone is a lot of times gone, ah,
by the way, the whole blending of the real world and
the virtual world is like a, the coolest thing ever to
me, I love it, like blurring that line.....and making
people really angry. So you guys need to get every
single piece of information around you ALL the time,
you never know what might be part of the game. [evil
smile]..... or not.

Questioner: You know I've always loved the MYST mythos
because it was so deep and so rich, but, even though
it's clearly Cyan's masterpiece it's not the only thing
you've ever done, you did the Manhole, Cosmic Osmo,
Spelunx, and very recently Cosmic Osmo's Hex Isle. And
just a couple of years ago in Los Angeles, Mysterium,
the very last night there were a few of us that just

sat down and played around in Cosmic Osmo [ran out?].
It was really fun, and so, while I certainly want to
see more of the MYST universe, whether it's the book of
Marrim or Open Source URU or something official from
you big or small, I can't help but be curious have you
considered making something entirely new, completely
outside of the MYST universe?

Rand Miller: Oh, yeah.

Questioner: And not necessarily, just, big and
revolutionary like another online thing, or new
interface, maybe even just a simple, single player
game?

Rand Miller: Yeah. So the question was, in a nutshell,
liked MYST, deep story, but you also did some fun kids
projects, and other little things, do you ever plan on
doing stuff that's not MYST in the future, even single
player, and the question (answer) is yes, we've
considered that, and we have, there's actually a few
ideas, which are probably hanging on the walls around
here that have come and gone, Latus (pronounced
"Lattice") which probably everybody knows about, there
was a project called Abduction which was more of a
single player game that we thought was really cool,
well, some of us... And, all, I mean, there's a few
more, there are little other internal code names of
things that we thought were unique games, but ...
weren't sure... publishers... once again, we're not...
we're a dying breed here, without a big development
house, so, having things smaller and tighter and
cleaner, and in inexpensive parts of Europe and China
are the way things are going. So, we've got to figure
out how to make that work and maybe the iPhone is a way
to do that, because it's somehow easier and quicker to
do things on an iPhone, and you don't work with a
publisher and you get it out easier, and the proceeds
come more directly to you, so it's "straighter," - but,
those are all things on the blackboard, that may see
the light of day, and we'd love to do that aren't
related to MYST, but it's just figuring out how to do
them.

From the Audience: Do they have an app for that?

Rand Miller: There's not an app for that.

Marten: I have two of sets of related questions. One,
what is peacock? I saw that upstairs, and two, is
Something Else, quote-unquote is "Something Else" still
somewhere on the burner someplace?

Rand Miller: Hmmm. Which "Something Else" is that?

[Crowd laughter]

From the Audience: The original.

From the Audience: Oh yeah.

[Lots of indecipherable crowd murmuring]

Rand Miller: Anyway, I wish there was someway I knew which Something Else...

From the Audience: Peacock?

Rand Miller: Peacock! Peacock is, that's funny I forgot that was up there, Peacock is like... Robyn and I did two "hypercard utilities" back when we were learning hypercard, like before the days of Manhole, or right in that area, and one was Peacock, and one was Mockingbird...

RAWA: Canary.

Rand Miller: Canary. That's right, Canary, we changed it to Canary. Copyright reasons. So, Canary and Peacock. Peacock was a hypercard database import/out-export tool which, by the way I used, recently, I think for MYST for the iPhone. I thought, "Gosh, I've got to get this data out of here, [smugly] I'll use Peacock!" And Canary was a, it was a midi sequencer done in hypercard that we actually used even on Manhole to do something used before we could do like, recorded music, and you could, it actually had midi input capabilities, so you could hook up the keyboard and play, you know, whatever you wanted, and it'd come up and you could slide the notes anywhere you wanted, and then change the instruments to whatever you wanted, and output it in a hypercard button that would play that song, so, yeah, Canary and Peacock, there you go that's reaching WAY back, way, way back. Eleri, I think I saw you next.

Eleri: So, when we were down in Austin, you told me there was one of those PreAfter stones out there.

Rand Miller: [Smiling big] There's WHAT?

Eleri: One of those PreAfter stones, things still out there!

Rand Miller: [jokingly] I don't know what you're talking about!

Eleri: Is it still there?

Rand Miller: Where'd you hear that from?

Eleri: Did you go check on it?

Rand Miller: [Laughs] You know, maybe everywhere you look you should just dig a hole. (Maybe you'll find it)

Simon_Bitdiddle: Alright, this is an URU question.

Rand Miller: Whoa whoa wait, hold that thought. How many people were, knew about PreAfter? Or, knew anything about PreAfter stuff? Not a lot. Yeah, not a lot of hands. How many people are like, "PreAfter, what the heck are you talking about?" Yeah... it was a little "Pre-URU" alternative reality kind of game that we did. Which, by the way, I mean, the stuff we... even the little things we did in Riven, that you may not be aware of, ... [to RAWA] what was that guy's name on that whole thing? Guildmaster ...

RAWA or Audience: Telanis?

Rand Miller: Was it Talanis?

From the Audience: The URU [Indecipherable]?

Rand Miller: It was the stuff we had during Riven. We had some crazy games going on during Riven, where, this saying to D'ni would show up, it was on CNN, but only because they interviewed Josh and it was on the screen behind him and it would show up in different places and then, there was a website you could go to, and there was phone numbers, and there was this whole game outside of the game. And I think it was actually the first ARG ever done, and eventually like somebody got...

RAWA: The winner got a beta copy of Riven.

Rand Miller: That's right, that's right it was before Riven, got a beta copy that was on a burned CD, and

From the Audience: Five burned CDs?

Rand Miller: And they couldn't reveal anything. In a gen... in a stroke of genius marketing on our part, the winner was not allowed to talk about it.

[Laughter]

Rand Miller: Maybe we should've re-thought that. It seemed really smart at the time. "Oh, and they shouldn't say a WORD! AWESOME!" That's why we're... that's why this building's empty! Okay.

Eric L: But Nobody talk about how cool it is. [Indecipherable]

Rand Miller: Yeah. So, so, the, so anyway we had someone call the phone...

RAWA: At a specific minute.

Rand Miller: ...at a specific minute, during that minute, and offer a phrase, in D'ni, and it was a specific day, a specific minute only they had to call us live and they did it. And it was kind of obscure, on how they, on how it all came about, and somebody did it, who is lost to history now, I don't know who it was. It was a female voice, that's all I know, who won... somebody called, like, the minute before, or and not on the minute, and if they called at the wrong time I think it was Ryan Miller, who was like "Hello?" and they're like, some D'ni phrase they'd say, and he's like "Who is this?" and they hung up. And went awww, I guess I messed it up. They didn't call... we were like, "Maybe they'll call back!" .... Nope! Missed it by THAT much! Ahhh, then somebody, like, nailed it. Said, called up and spoke in D'ni, and won the prize. So that was cool. OK, go ahead.

Simon: Alright. This is a question about the Pod Ages.

Rand Miller: Pod Ages. Yes.

Simon: I understand that there were animals for the first one. Where are the animals in the OTHER ONES?

From the Audience: Dead.

Rand Miller: Animals are like really hard to do. Pods, on the other hand, are really easy. So we worked on the pods first, always planning that we'd get time to stick those animals in.

Simon: What was the animal for the BROKEN POD?

Rand Miller: What was the broken - I don't even remember - was the broken pod, that wasn't the dark one?

Crowd: Yeah, the dark one.

From the Audience: The flashing strobe lights.

Rand Miller: Maybe we made that dark so we didn't have to put animals in. Did we mention that our budget got REALLY tight, at the end there? Had to come up with content, and it was like, pods, with nothing in 'em... yeah, we wanted to put stuff in.

Simon: I mean, it wasn't wireframes right?

Rand Miller: Exactly. By the way, how many of you liked, wait, was it Minkata? Was that the, like, desert one?

Crowd: [Agrees]

Rand Miller: How many of you loved that. That was big, it was big, wasn't it? We were designing Minkata, and

there's nine guys in a room and we're like ok, we just made the pods, now what? BIIIIG! BIIIIG pod! Oh but the engine can't handle it. Well, don't put anything in there! Just... desert! But big, big desert! Any of you like, explore the edges of it?

Crowd: Oh yeah. And there was nothing there.

Rand Miller: Sweet.

[Indecipherable Crowd talking]

Eleri: ... wander in a direction for half an hour.

Rand Miller: Yeah, didn't you just wonder, what's out here? [Running motion] ... a part of my sick, twisted mind. Minkata was just ten miles in every direction, versus, what was the puzzle where you just had to stand in one place for like 13 minutes?

Crowd: [Groans] Watcher's Sanctuary

Rand Miller: [Laughs] So don't, you didn't like that one? Because [Indecipherable] okay, I hated it but it was pretty cool? Thirteen minutes! What game would make you stay in one place without touching the mouse or keyboard for thirteen minutes? I thought that one was great.

Crowd: [Groaning, laughing]

Rand Miller: I had to push hard to get that one through. Everybody here at the office was like, "We don't need to do that." I was like, YEAH! NO WAY! Thirteen minutes you just stand there, like don't move, They won't believe it's true! I thought that one was great. And how many of you read the entire book of, you know, the Prophet? All those pages. Yeah, I tried, that was good stuff right there. People write all that stuff! OK, more questions, sorry, I'm out of answers but questions?

Simon: Which one of you do we have to blame for the pellets taking FOREVER?

Rand Miller: [pointing] Oh. RAWA.

RAWA: Thirteen minutes was too short.

Simon: Also, who do we have to blame for the pellet, the light monitoring machine breaking?

The Crowd: Oh, the Dalak?

Simon: Yeah, the Dalak.

Rand Miller: What was the light monitoring machine?

Crowd: [Explains]

Rand Miller: That was... that was probably... lack of funds. "We'd better shut down the light monitoring machine." [makes turning off lever motion with hand] Yessir.

Blade: As the community goes on, you know we've got projects, and guilds, and... how, what would you like the community to do with your world?

Rand Miller: Wooooooooooo. [Makes round open mouth expression]. Well, I mean, the interesting thing is that people are entertained in a different, in a lot of different ways. And you know how the discussion between the neutrals and the... the sidetakers, but there's much more that that, there's neutrals and sidetakers and helpers and instigators and ... and then there's creatives, and then there's, ah, followers, and then there's lurkers, and just like there's different kinds of human personalities, so the interesting thing is, if you're not making content, some of those personalities are satisfied because you build relationships and get to do those things, but it's the content that keeps us going but the hardest part of all of this is, I mean, I don't want URU to become Second Life necessarily, that's not a dig on Second Life, it's just there's so much stuff in Second Life that I don't even know, it's hard to cull through it all, but I, I think you guys making content that shows up in the world is like somehow the key to it staying alive and us being able to add things being maybe that are more ...call them "Blessed" only because we know where the story arc should go and we don't want to tell you because it's cool but if we ever get the chance you will like it, we don't want to ruin that surprise, so if at some point we release Open Source and you guys can get back in the Cavern and, and Ages come out that are like D'ni Writers who write Ages that are ....not like the Masters but like people who are learning to write ages, I think that is kinda cool.....Because what that means is, and this is where we always wanted to go,... is that there will be people who are creatives, who want to do that, there will also be people that are maintainers, or testers, who want to join the Guild of Maintainers but who first go and go.... I fell through the World here, ... [laughter]...Good thing I had a maintainer suit on for falling forever. Ah, there are people who are cartographers who want to document those new ages and put them somewhere, there people who, who want to translate things in the Ages or help document things in those new Ages, there's people who want to be helpers in those new Ages, and in all those things it

would be cool to have Guilds to correspond to them in real world, we were starting to go that way ... to me, it's taking the idea of the D'ni Guilds and moving it to practical application if it goes Open source, what really, how, what new guilds would there be, so people can merge their personalities into that kind of thing, that's what I love, that's what I would really love.

Rand Miller: [points to new questioner] Yes?

Questioner: Okay, being a physicist, engineering kind of guy, so what resources do you need, talking about what you would like to do..... the problem is you don't have it...[indecipherable] What resources do you need to accomplish that?

Rand Miller: The biggest issue we have right now is we built these tools, for us, and there are, ...there's primary stuff, stuff that we had to license, people we had to pay money to, and embedded in the engine and that we can't just release to the public necessarily and its not just the server engine, its actually the tools that work in 3D Studio Max so that you can build the Ages too, and there's the problem of people, normal people don't necessarily already have 3D Studio Max but enough might have it, and there's plug-ins that work in there, so all is kind of, detaching the pieces, and the weirdness that we built, to get it out to people so they can do it, so that just takes a technical resource ability, people who know the insides of it which at this point is limited in our company.

Questioner: But you're basically...earlier you were, essentially saying there's... in effect you got one person who is tied up, that implies if here were cut loose you could get it done, is that correct?

Rand Miller: Yea, I think it would take, Mark DeForest probably knows his stuff in the engine as good as anybody we've got right now and he doesn't even work here, he works in the Tri-Cities area, but he's working on other stuff. It would probably take him a month or so of culling through this stuff, maybe two months, although he's good at saying it would take say, 90 days for everything he has to, so.

Questioner: I used to use a 2 and a half multiplier. [Indecipherable] So in essence you are saying it isn't a great deal of effort.

Rand Miller: No. It's not a great deal. It's just we don't have even a little deal of people and resources right now, so, and just, we were going down that path and it's like, well, we got a little money left and

hopefully we can get some jobs but while Mark's waiting, maybe we can get this to Open Source, and for some of that Mark isn't even getting paid for, so.

Questioner: Any creative way to arrange to do that with, say, talented volunteers?

Rand Miller: I would think so, its a little bit hard with talented volunteers because you guys would be working with Code you haven't necessarily seen before, although, a few of you may have.

Questioner: Not that I am volunteering mind you, but I figure if I bring it up all of a sudden maybe something might happen.

Rand Miller: Right, right and I think that's another Guild ... in a weird kind of way that, of people who are working behind the scenes so to answer your question, YES. I think it's possible. .... There's some technical issues there like what do we send and how do we send it and who do we send it to, and who is the keeper of that stuff, and ... but at this point it is kind of just... sitting there, so we have no problem ...oh, by the way....another reason we don't have necessarily a lot of people in this building is that I don't have a problem with just giving it away if people can use it at this point, so... it sounds like fun, just a matter of making the right connections, tying it up. Yes. [Points to new questioner]

Questioner (Oscelot?): Who decided the Maintainers should wear red shirts?

[Laughter]

Rand Miller: [points] [Indecipherable] ... you can see them easily that is all that matters isn't it?... oh, ok, we are going to run out of time.

Alahmat: We are going to run out of time.

Transcription:

Dr CrisGer – Chris Gerlach, Member of Guild of Maintainers MystOnline URU Live, Member of Amber Horizon (47) Hood, Member of URU community since 2004, Mystcommunity.com, Member of MOUL for, (March 2006), Member of DRC For, (2004), Fellow, D'ni Linguistic Fellowship (2006), Moderator, Mystonline.info Chat room and website: Ecological Archaeologist

Marten – John Johns - Member and Past Guild Master of Guild of Messengers, MystOnline URU Live, Member of URU

Community since 2004, Member of MOUL For, Member of The Great Tree.

Resources:

Here is a detailed description of the first "Mysterium", the real life combination of clues and events that Rand refers to at which the Real Zandi participated.... to help keep some of the history of URU accessible to all: I do not recall presently the source of this as the website that was on the document in my archives is no longer active.

Some of the old history and the early journey referred to....including the Billboard, ...others can hopefully give the details on the Preafter.

Dr Crisger

Journey #1

This was the very first journey that the majority of people knew about. Preparation for it began in June, 2001 however it didn't truly begin until May, 2002 before ending sometime in 2003. Its purpose was to interest people in Yeesha's message by engaging them in a series of puzzles which would culminate in them going to D'ni and beginning Journey #2. Much like the other journeys, this one was split into several parts. However unlike future journeys, each part could only be completed once.

Zandi Prime

This began in 2001 when Jeff Zandi went to an inn called the Carlsbad Inn on Highway 62 near Carlsbad, New Mexico. He approached the manager and asked to place a picture on the back of his billboard and offered good money if he were allowed to do it. The manager of the inn told Zandi of a local sign man and a contract was paid for the sign to be placed for 1 year from June, 2001 to the end of May, 2002. The picture that was put up also had the co-ordinates N35 09.770, W106 43.084. Apparently Zandi's first intention was to have a series of co-ordinates attached to the image on the billboard, however for reasons unknown Zandi changed his plans.

In May, 2002 Zandi made a series of cryptic posts on the DRC forum to get people to go to the sign on the billboard which would be taken down at the end of May. It began with the Billboard thread as well as page. He

made a final post in the form of changing Victor Laxman's username into his own and adding a PS note which can be read in this thread. For the first post Zandi's e-mail was 080401@N3217997W10416448 with his e-mail changing for the second post to 080501@currentargus.com. The original "e-mail" were co-ordinates to the billboard with the second one involving a website located in New Mexico which would have served to reaffirm that the location was in New Mexico. However the people following Zandi's clues misunderstood the co-ordinates at first and thought they pointed to a location 24 km south of Carlsbad.

Next Adreitz, one of the members of the forum, discovered a puzzle on Spyder's website, someone who had secretly released information from inside of Cyan through puzzles. His connection to Zandi isn't known, although it is possible Zandi contacted him somehow and asked for his help. However after completing Spyder's puzzle, the members of the forum were still unsure what to do. The sign was taken down unseen by anyone from the DRC forum.

The Next stage was during the Mysterium event where Myst fans got together. One of the attendees had a shirt that he wore with a picture of a spiral. The purpose of that is currently unknown, although it may have been worn with the hopes someone would ask them about it so they could provide some information. During Mysterium Zandi also sent a fax to them (that can be found here) on the 19th of July, 2002. The members of the DRC forum finally understood where Zandi's co-ordinates were pointing to.

The DRC forum members approached the members of the Yahoo New Mexico Geocaching forum about going to the GPS co-ordinates. While a couple did, it wasn't until Jim of Team Ziacache went and spoke with the inn manager that the sign was discovered. After this was announced by Jim, Zandi sent him and another geocacher who had been involved a link to a picture gallery Zandi had set up. At this stage Zandi had placed three pictures in the gallery, one of the t-shirt attendee during Mysterium, a partial of the picture that had been on the billboard along with a spiral design on a piece of paper. The DRC forum members eventually tied each image to three e-mail addresses Zandi had.

The DRC forum members hit a dead-end until NetWatcher called the sign man in New Mexico and discovered the co-ordinates that had been attached to the image on the billboard.

<u>Zandi One</u>

The co-ordinates connected with the sign on the billboard were to location around Boca Negra Canyon. Initial searches of the area didn't reveal anything so Zandi sent a further hint in an e-mail to a geocacher that can be read here. Geocacher Dave Plugge went to the area once more and after some further digging found a spiral. When Zandi planted the spiral is unknown, however it is possible he planted it back in 2001. Engraved on the back of the spiral was the word Preafter which led to Zandi's website preafter.com.

The website's intention at this stage was to have a spiral dim after each part of the journey had been completed and would then link to whatever the final solution involved. The following spiral would then link to a clue to begin the next part of the journey. Zandi sent one more hint in a post on the geocaching website which can be read here. Dave Plugge sent the e-mail of the spiral and the first spike was dimmed and then linked to a page with the picture that was sent.

<u>Zandi Two</u>

Zandi placed a new link on the Preafter website that led to a webpage that he updated with a series of 10 digit numbers with the message "Personal proof is required." below those numbers. The DRC forum members were quick to realize the numbers were ISB numbers, which Zandi chose based on the letter of the first word in their title, and released them in an order that when the first letters from the titles were taken and placed together it spelt "ITS BENEATH THE TREE." The forum members didn't realize this at first but did realise they needed to send pictures of themselves and the book, which they did.

Zandi edited the pictures to have numbers on them. The numbers pointed to specific words in the Myst books that had been published by Cyan Worlds. He used the format Book.Page.Paragraph.Word with the book corresponding to the D'ni numeral on the cover of each book. When placed together the words were to co-ordinates to the Tent Rocks monument in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He placed the images on his website and the explorers were quick to discover the co-ordinates. They also knew they discovered the hidden message in the book titles.

Before Zandi revealed the final number, a website was set up to track a radio that Jim of Team Ziacache, Dave Plugge, and Mike S when they went to the location that the final number would reveal. Already knowing that

they needed to be somewhere at Tent Rocks, the 3 geocachers went there on the day that Zandi revealed the final number. After the number was revealed, the 3 geocachers found the spiral and took a picture of it before e-mailing it to Zandi. Zandi then dimmed the second spike and placed a link to the picture with the third spike leading to the next clue.

<u>Zandi Three</u>

Zandi selected a number of albums and took a word or number from each that when placed together would lead to a payphone number with the message "Be there October 26, 6 o'clock". To begin with Zandi placed the numbers 075992544726-7 onto the page. The first group of numbers are the Universal Product Code to Graceland by Paul Simon. The 7 referred to Zandi's wish for there to be 7 people in the picture that was to be sent to him. The purpose of having 7 people in the picture would be to foreshadow the fact that there would later be 7 journey cloths in Journey #2. However the 7 was misinterpreted by the forum members to refer to the track number. After they began searching for clues in this manner, Zandi finally sent them the message "Get off the track" which resulted in them correctly interpreting the 7.

After Zandi was sent a picture of the album with 7 people in the picture, he updated the page with a track number and time. The forum members worked out the purpose and the message was worked out. When Zandi called the payphone he provided the GPS co-ordinates N34 58.942 W107 29.185 and the third spiral was quickly discovered.

<u>Zandi Four</u>

On the 1st of November, 2002 Zandi provided a link to a page titled Uru with a list of requirements that would be needed to enter D'ni, along with a message for people who did met those requirements to e-mail Zandi. The Uru title was to further the idea of a gathering that had been previously introduced in the group photos sent to Zandi. This page was updated on the 13th of November, 2002 after many people had e-mailed Zandi to say that he had enough people who met his requirements for now. The requirements Zandi had posted were not intended to be exclusionary, but were merely necessary to meet if someone wished to journey to D'ni. Approximately 1 week later a selection of people who had e-mailed Zandi was made and invited to begin Journey #2. Only a small percentage of those who

originally e-mailed Zandi were selected, how they were
selected is currently unknown.

While this was happening, Zandi Four had also begun on
the 1st of November, 2002. Zandi had selected 14 movies
to be used to encrypt his message "BE READY FOR A HIKE"
which was in reference to those whom he would invite to
D'ni. He did this by providing the IMDB ID along with
the message "Unique group proofs are required" along
with the message to hint that the number was related to
movies "Books... CDs... ??...". For this part of the
journey Zandi decided to have pictures with the movie
and a certain number of people in the picture. How
people knew how many picture each movie required is
unknown although it appears the first was done by luck
with a barrage of proofs sent to him, with the
successful one being with four people in it.

After each proof had been sent Zandi would then place a
quote on his website that corresponded to a specific
scene in the movie. The explorers were able to get the
scene numbers which when placed together corresponded
to a URL on the Preafter website, as well as the hidden
message warning of a hike. However they misunderstood
the numbers and thought them co-ordinates that were
somewhere in Bluff City. Zandi stopped them from
planning a trip there by sending the message "Bluff
City. Don't go there" hinting that the numbers had
purposely been a red herring. He then went on to say
"Use the number at the site" which resulted in the URL:
http://www.preafter.com/Four/36284728215725.html

On the new URL Zandi had placed "Before and after"
underlined and beneath it "Washington ------ Berlin."
This was an old parlor game that required a 6 letter
word so that "Washington ------" and "------ Berlin"
resulted in something that made sense. The answer was
quickly discovered to be Irving. After it was
discovered Zandi placed two more of these puzzles on it
and the three missing words hinted at Millennium Park
in Irving, TX.

On the 26th of November, 2002 Zandi posted the date
11/30/02 and time 2pm below the parlor game puzzle
before finally posting "Be at the fountain" the next
day. On the 30th, DRC members LRBolt and Sowden went to
the fountain at the Millenium Park at the correct time
and met Zandi there. Zandi gave them the coordinates to
the edge of the De-Na-Zin Wilderness alongside the
Navajo Reservation in New Mexico. He also gave them the
cryptic message "For the next stage, it's in your face."
On the 1st of December, 2002 Rbnh00d222 went to the
location and found the next spiral hidden in a rock

formation that looked like the profile of a face when viewed from a certain angle.

Zandi Five

This last portion of the journey began on the 5th of December, 2002 when Zandi posted a link to a new page on the 9th spike rather, which was unexpected as it was expected that the link would appear on the 5th spike. Zandi decided to have those who had the four spirals to meet and take a picture of the meeting with the spirals. However because they were spread out across at least two states, the owners of the spikes began to decide to just mail the spikes to a central location. Upon seeing this Zandi posted a message on his website asking them that this wasn't the preferred solution, but could be done if the owners meeting together was impossible. Eventually the owners of the spikes arranged to meet in Santa Fe, New Mexico on the 21st of December, 2002. Upon receiving the picture of the meeting, Zandi changed the spiral design to the hand present on journey cloths. The reason for the original design is still unclear.

Zandi Six

Zandi took down the requirements to go to D'ni on his website on the 2nd of January, 2003 before he sent this e-mail out asking people to sign up once more. Those that did receive an invitation to go to D'ni were later sent this e-mail.

Zandi Six began sometime in 2003 when Zandi asked for pictures of hand symbols from the journey cloths that people had made. The larger the symbol and more public the place the better. Zandi would accept a certain amount of pictures of the symbols of a certain size and public area before raising the bar and requiring a larger size and more public area. Those that he did accept were sent a t-shirt from him with the hand symbol on it and a link to the Preafter website. This was the last part of the first journey.

Timeline of URU

1756 Gehn returns to D'ni and begins restoring it.

1770 Gehn returns to the Cleft and takes Atrus to D'ni to help him restore it.

1811 Atrus and Katran link to Averone in order to seek help in reaching D'ni.

1814 Atrus returns to D'ni and begins gathering the D'ni to begin restoring the city. They eventually abandon the idea.

1987 John Loftin discovers D'ni

1990 Dr. Watson's first expedition to D'ni

1992 Last year D'ni is completely uninhabited

1997 Formation of the D'ni Restoration Council

1998 Cyan expedition to D'ni

1999 Major expedition brings needed machinery and tools to City

2000 Restoration is started on The Island (Ae'gura)

2001 DRC begins restoration of the first neighbourhood

2002 DRC allows first authorised explorers to visit D'ni and a few Ages

2003 Zandi convinces the DRC to let numerous people into D'ni

2004 The gates to D'ni are closed due to a lack of funding.

2005 In December Laxman approaches the other DRC members about returning to D'ni.

2006 The DRC open the gates to D'ni once more.

2007 Cate introduces herself to the Explorers.

2008 April, the Cavern is closed for continued restoration work.

2009 The Cavern will be reopened, sometime fairly soon, once preparations are completed.

RAWA
Posted: Mon Aug 24, 2009 7:22 am — Post subject:

Nice transcript!

A couple of comments:

1) A few more casualties of the "um" search and destroy – all instances of "human" and at least one instance of "number" are now "hman" and "nber", respectively. There may be others, but those were the ones I noticed as I was reading through it. ☐

2) The Guildmaster from the secret phone call in March of 1997 was Yahtair, and the winner's name is known,

but we'll keep her anonymous unless I hear from her that she's ok with her name being released.

3) Preafter history corrections:

   a) The first Mysterium was in Spokane in 2000, the Mysterium at Carlsbad was the next year (2001).

   b) Zandi's billboard in Carlsbad was originally purchased on September 24th, 2000 (to coincide with the D'ni holiday), long before we knew Mysterium would be there in August 2001.

😃

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

Prologue and Live

RAWA
Posted: Thu Mar 02, 2006 11:32 am   Post subject:

Note: "DRC Members" for the purposes of this post include all interactions with Cyan controlled characters, even though many (Nick White, Rand, Wheely, etc.) aren't "DRC members".

Zardoz wrote:

> *In the early days of the Prologue, <snip>*
> *it dawned on me: Oh, Cyan is just making this up as they go along.*

Partially true. Unlike Live, Prologue was not planned out in detail, only in broad strokes, and the details were filled in pretty much on the fly. The challenge in Prologue was to figure out little things that we could do for "free" (saving the major storylines and content for Live).

We're pretty much in the same position now with Until Uru. There is no new content. That's just the way it is. All the content that we had ready or nearly ready for Live was repurposed for the xpacks and Myst V. The pipeline is (nearly) empty. Even if we get funding tomorrow, the pipeline will take months/years to fill again (depending on your definition of "full"). (That isn't to say that the pipeliine has to be "full" before anything new is released, but it won't happen overnight either.)

So the question is: What do we do in the meantime? There are several different opinions here at Cyan (kinda like the DRC). To make it worse, options are extremely limited, pretty much ranging from doing nothing at all to doing small "Prologue" kinds of things that can be done for "free" (e.g. occasional interactions with the DRC/"lightweight soap opera").

There are pros and cons of the different positions.

Nothing at all:

Pros

- It's clear to the players that nothing new is going to happen in Until Uru. If you aren't happy with Until Uru as it is, then wait and hope that Live begins someday. (No hard feelings from me if that's your choice.)

Cons

- Nothing is happening.

- The would-be funders would like to see something happening to determine if Live is worth funding.

Small things happening that can be done for "free":

Pros

- Something is happening.

Cons

- It gives a false impression. As soon as small things start happening, the expectation of larger things happening is set, even though we've been very clear that this is still "Until Uru" not "Live".

- The would-be funders only get to see what "Prologue" was like, not "Live" (which could be worse than seeing nothing happen, IMO).

Zardoz wrote:

> *And so I envisioned my future in Uru as one of never being there when things happened (I work and am in the same time zone as Cyan), leaving me to pay $10-15 per month for the occasional new Age and LOTS of chat logs. No thanks.*

It sounds like you're saying "when things happened" = "direct DRC interaction", which seems like you've chosen a pretty really narrow definition. (Granted, for "Prologue" and "Until Uru", that has some truth,

because there is no new content, but you're clearly referencing "Live" in that paragraph.)

That said, it is certainly within the realm of possibility that DRC members would have made appearances at other times of the day during "Live" (as they did in Prologue and they are now in Until Uru).

<u>That</u> said, if you were only willing to pay $10-15/mo. to get to talk to the DRC members, then, yeah, you were going to be disappointed with "Live". There isn't really any way around that. The DRC interactions are only one facet of the story in the cavern, and an intentionally small one at that.

To me, the $10-15 was mainly for the Ages. At the planned rate of one new Age and several smaller areas per month, you'd pretty much be paying the same over time for "Live" content as you were for "Myst" content, as you'd be getting roughly Myst's amount content every 3-4 months.

Zardoz wrote:

> *Now I'm experiencing deja vu all over again. I find myself wading through endless chat logs with an entertainment value of, say, waking up my leg.*

If you don't find it entertaining (understandable), then <u>don't do it</u>. 😊 Find something to do that you <u>do</u> enjoy. "Live", to some extent, will be what you make of it. That was/is even more the case in Prologue/Until Uru.

Zardoz wrote:

> *Worse, I feel like there IS a method to the madness, namely, Let's stir the explorers' hornets' nest with the DRC stick and see what happens. Or as the title suggests, let's give them a new task and see how they respond -*

That seems like a pretty pessimistic way to put it, but once again you're partially correct. It was more like, "Let's give them a fairly difficult goal to work toward and give them time to come up with their own solution."

Kinda flies it the face of "only 'super-players' can affect things." Eh? This is something that's left up to all of you to figure out. Do what you want.

IMO, Ryan's point in the quoted transcript isn't that the DRC are going to force you to have five representatives, it's that since the offer has been made, do you really think that there aren't at least five people that will take them up on it?

Zardoz wrote:

> *if they do it right, we'll give them some cheese.*

There is no "right." We'll give you whatever "cheese" we can either way. You're just collectively choosing whether you get "American" cheese, Velveeta, pepper jack, provolone, etc.

Zardoz wrote:

> *I say, Just say No! to cheese.*

You don't have to take the cheese, Zardoz, but for now, that's all there is to eat. 😄

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Thu Mar 02, 2006 1:12 pm   Post subject:

JWPlatt wrote:

> *My prime motivation to sign up would be to explore the fantastic, beautiful worlds you (collectively) create and solve the mysteries or puzzles. The online aspect of gathering others to go along on the quest is of huge benefit and purpose to me.*

Then it sounds like "Live" (cautious optimism) will be for you, then. 😄

JWPlatt wrote:

> *I would NOT go online just to chat in 3D or play out the soap opera.*

Understood. As I said earlier, that's not the point of "Live", but it is pretty much what we're limited to at the moment.

JWPlatt wrote:

> *Cooperation and competition would be great in the game, but divisive content becomes uncomfortable, undesirable, and finally, unpayable (as in $).*

I agree, but just as there are different personalities up here on the surface, there are different personalities down in the Cavern. Grouping with like-minded people is a natural thing. The DRC couldn't stop that if they tried.

That doesn't mean that people with different personalities/affiliations can't work together. But,

ultimately, that's up to you all (individually and as a group) to choose to do or not to do. Kinda like so-called "real life". 😃

JWPlatt wrote:

I have mentioned elsewhere how the Uru backstory or narrative of Yeesha versus the DRC seems to be a manufactured division among potential subscribers and absurd because no one who wants to play Uru Online is going to want to shut down the Cavern as it appears purists like Yeesha and Zandi do.

Yeesha and Zandi don't want to close the Cavern. As far as the Uru story goes, Yeesha and Zandi are responsible for the majority of explorers getting access to the Cavern in the first place. If they didn't want you there, you probably wouldn't be there. 😃

But they do have different goals than the DRC have. Sharper had different goals. The DRC members themselves had different opinions.

Maybe one of their philosophies matches yours and you want to show your support of their philosophy. Maybe none do. Maybe you don't care. Either way, that's just one facet of "Live" (have I said "cautious optimism"?) ignoring that facet if it doesn't suit you is fine with us.

JWPlatt wrote:

A civil schism (i.e. soap opera) with no hooks into actual gameplay (i.e. dependent solely on role-play) is not my idea of worthwhile fun.

Again, I agree. That is not the goal of "Live" (though it will be one facet). It is what we have at our disposal to play with, though, at the moment.

JWPlatt wrote:

While I would still subscribe to view the scenery and play the game, political dramatics (within the game) hold zero interest for me.

Understood. Let's all hope that Live gets a chance to live, and those of you who aren't interested in politics, soap operas, etc. will have other things to choose to do.

JWPlatt wrote:

Thanks for your ear.

You're welcome.

😃

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Thu Mar 02, 2006 1:50 pm   Post subject:

Jahuti wrote:

> *It was a Cyan shard, run by Cyan and that promised a little something new. Because of that, they came in droves.*

It's a catch-22. We have to set up a shard so that we can set a few ground-rules so that the potential financiers have a set place to get valid information and opinions. Otherwise, Live has no chance at all.

We open it, specifically stating that there will be no new content. Rand's letter, the updated FAQ, and the Giant Gnarly Disclaimer! are very specific as to what should be expected from the Cyan shard. "Please don't confuse this official Until Uru server as a full renewal of Uru Live", "there will be no new content yet", "This is NOT URU Live.", "We are not fixing any issues with the client at this time.", "There are no updates or enhancements,". etc.

Even so, just opening it sets expectations higher for some than can be realistically met.

Jahuti wrote:

> *Easy stuff: Make the Museum door work. Add collision to the plaza next to the palace. Put in some PotS Ages. Maybe fix some bugs.*

Nope. Our efforts are going to be focused preparing for Live (cautious optimism) not fixing Until Uru. If you weren't happy with Until Uru when it was released, then you're likely not going to be happy with Until Uru now. That's fine. No hard feelings. Wait and hope Live gets a shot.

Jahuti wrote:

> *It is the height of ignorance to ask people to show up before anything is built, and it may make some people nervous to build things on speculation like that because it requires a leap of faith.*

Many worthwhile things in life require a leap of faith. For those who don't want to take that leap, that's OK. Wait for "Live". We specifically and intentionally set expectations low for this. Raising them higher when

we've been so specific is only going to cause you to be disappointed.

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Thu Mar 02, 2006 2:36 pm   Post subject:

JWPlatt wrote:

> *RAWA needs a "co" (Cautious Optimism) symbol, like the trademark symbol, so he doesn't have to spend all that time typing "(cautious optimism)" after each reference to "Live."*

I toyed with the idea, but ultimately decided I wanted to have it explicitly spelled out each time.

😄

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Fri Mar 03, 2006 1:22 pm   Post subject:

Astarte wrote:

> *A few fixes would be great.*

Understood. I even agree on many levels, but the fact is that we are not going to be spending our time on fixes for Until Uru. We're going to focus our efforts on bringing Live (cautious optimism) back, and making fixes for that. I don't know how to say that any clearer than I've already said it (and said it in the FAQ, and said it in the Giant Gnarly Disclaimer, etc.).

Astarte wrote:

> *You can only dangle the withered carrot for so long before people figure it out and decide to go looking for something with less stagnation and some real substance.*

We're not trying to pretend that our withered carrot is a fresh carrot.

We've clearly said that the carrot that we have right now (Until Uru) is withered and broken, but it's the only one we've got at the moment. And if you aren't interested in a withered carrot then go get a nice, fresh carrot from another vegetable stand. Really.

Please. We completely understand. In fact, I'm blatantly recommending you to go get a carrot that you like. Please. 😃

The fact is we're not selling any carrots right now. We'll give you this withered carrot that we have, if you want it. All was ask in return for the broken carrot is that you understand that you're accepting this withered, broken carrot AS IS.

We're hoping that a nice, new, fresh batch of carrots is coming in from the Carrot Farm. If the withered carrot we're giving away for free isn't for you, we just ask that you come back and check out the nice, new, fresh, shiny carrots if and when (cautious optimism) the carrot truck arrives.

Astarte wrote:

> *Think of it as sprucing up the house you're trying to sell. Face it .. not many would be interested in buying a house where you fell through the kitchen floor at odd times. Or had doors jammed as to make them impassable. Or couldn't keep the power on long enough to cook a meal. With NO hope that these things would ever be fixed, regardless of how nice it looked .. it's not a very appealing proposition for either side.*
>
> *Seriously !!*

That's precisely the point, Astarte. We're not trying to sell Until Uru. That's why we've clearly laid out what to expect in Until Uru (no changes, fixes, updates), and why I specifically spelled out that if you aren't happy with Until Uru AS IS, please, please, please don't come back expecting anything other than what Until Uru has been for the last year and a half.

Seriously !! 😃

Coming back in now and expecting anything other than what Until Uru has been will only frustrate you, and doesn't help anyone. We know things are broken. Those things will be fixed, but we will not be fixing them in Until Uru.

The potential financiers know and understand what Until Uru is and what it is not. They aren't interested in funding Until Uru, but they are using Until Uru to collect information at the moment. Until Uru as it is, flaws and all, withered carrot that it is, broken-down house that it is, works for their purposes AS IS.

Thanks.

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Fri Mar 03, 2006 1:45 pm   Post subject:

Zardoz wrote:

> *So, are you saying that the identity of the secret funder is really Bugs Bunny?*

"Shhh.... Be vewy, vewy quiet... heh-heh-heh-heh-heh"

Zardoz wrote:

> *Do I get my cheese now?*

Sorry, I'm all out of cheese.

But I have this withered carrot...

😃

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Fri Mar 03, 2006 3:23 pm   Post subject:

Jawn Henry wrote:

> *if lots of people are willing to go on this "broken" somewhat buggy, shard (and for "old" players, "stale" - no new content), then it might be worth "watering" with $$$.*

Obviously, the more people who want Until Uru (with the understanding of all its current limitations), the better that the potential of Live looks to the financiers.

BUT

I really don't want people coming to Until Uru with false expectations. We've been extremely blatant about what Until Uru is and what it isn't, and these things still come up. So it isn't like I'm just throwing up a straw-man argument.

SO

If you know someone who might be interested, and think they can see the potential of Live (cautious optimism) even through the somewhat muddy glass of Until Uru, by all means, invite them to join us in Until Uru. I just

ask that you make every effort to set their expectations appropriately when you invite them (just as we've tried to set yours).

My last few posts I've been pretty critical of Until Uru with the "withered carrot", "broken-down house" analogies. The fact is, I think Until Uru is great, all things considered, even with the flaws it has. I mean, hey, it's FREE*. 😊

If they come and find it's not their thing, that's A-OK too. It's no big deal, as long as they haven't been turned off for the potential of Live in the process.

Hope that helps,

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

* Free, if they own Uru.

This is the tiny disclaimer writing found on everything you've ever seen with "FREE*" on it. Your mileage may vary. Void where prohibited. Prohibited where void. No exchanges. No refunds. No shirt, no shoes, no service. I'm rubber, you're glue. Etc. Etc.

RAWA
Posted: Fri Mar 03, 2006 3:44 pm   Post subject:

JWPlatt wrote:

> *Just an aside - isn't RAWA getting far more blatant about confirming the actual existence of renewed Live (cautious optimism) development effort?*

A renewed Live is not something I'd bet my house on at this point in time. I am "cautiously optimistic" (emphasis on "cautiously"... wait, no... emphasis on "optimistic"... no... emphasis on both "cautiously" and "optimistic") that it might come back someday. Maybe. I hope it does. I hope you hope it does too. 😊

But just to be safe...

/delete all posts by RAWA for past two days.

/use Men in Black "flashy thing."

<phew>

JWPlatt wrote:

> *So maybe we're not jumping the gun (or the carrot) too much by speculating about the retail release.*

Too early to speculate... no. Just don't base your
expectations on your speculations.

😬

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Fri Mar 03, 2006 4:06 pm   Post subject:

Time...

Yeah, I've been typing some of my posts while in the
middle of other meetings yesterday and today, actually.

Clearing up a few of these OOC issues was important
enough to do both for a day or two, but I do need to be
paying more attention, especially when that Rand guy is
talking.

I'll still be reading as many of the posts as I can (as
I have been all along), but I won't be able to be
nearly as vocal "soon".

I've enjoyed it while it lasted, though.

😬

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Fri Mar 03, 2006 4:31 pm   Post subject:

---

vidkid7 wrote:

> *What is Cyan's stance on sharing your Uru:ABM disc*
> *with other people who want to give Until Uru a go?*

<sticks fingers in ears and yells "LA LA LA LA">

Sorry, I didn't hear what you were saying.

Actually, our stance is to point people who don't have
Uru: ABM or Uru: CC to places like Amazon.com (for
example), where you can buy a copy for under $10 and
avoid all those nasty, grey areas of legality.

😬

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

The Day of the Great Race

RAWA
Posted: Tue May 23, 2006 2:09 pm   Post subject:

Zardoz wrote:

> *As part of the Gold Party Cyan had back in 2003*
> *(when UABM went gold), Cyan had their own race (long*
> *story, but I have some pictures from it, which might*
> *have been posted somewhere but I can't recall where*
> *or if). The second place team was RAWA and Bill*
> *Slease; from the picture, I can't tell who finished*
> *first, or what their times were.*
>
> *RAWA, care to reveal who whupped you?*

<pulls up a rocking chair, gets the young
whippersnappers to gather around for the telling of
"The Day of the Great Race".>

 "I remember the day of the Great Race like it was
yesterday. It was the morning of the 10th of October,
2003..."

The rules for our race:

> *------- (from Rand's email announcing the race on*
> *Oct. 9, 2003) -----*
>
> *All participants will start on the ACA (Avatar*
> *Customization Age) with a new avatar of their choice.*
>
> *Participants use whatever settings they want.*
> *Settings can be switched during race.*
>
> *Update all Ages from server, or install from single*
> *player CD.*
>
> *Journals are allowed. If you need notes for solving*
> *certain puzzles (Kadish!) get them today.*
>
> *Yeesha Pages and Bahro Linking Stones are not*
> *required.*
>
> *Winner is the first player who shows Tony their*
> *avatar in Relto wearing the Yeesha shirt.*
>
> *Sorry - no handicapping for slow machines. ☐*
>
> *--------*

Several people were racing alone. Others had joined up
into teams. Bill and I were a team. I was "driving". I
had planned my course very carefully the night before
and written down 129 "checkpoints":

1 - Click >>URU, link to Cleft (link delay)

2 - Arrive in Cleft

3 - Cleft JC 1 - sign

4 - Cleft JC 2 - Whark

...

Bill was my navigator, reading off the next checkpoint on my route and writing down the time as I passed each checkpoint. So I have a very accurate record of our race.

There were a few places in my route where the amount of delay was "random", such as in Gahreesen when you have to wait for the rotation of the building(s). On the day of the race, we were very fortunate, and our waits were shorter than they were in my practice run. (getting inside the particular door I wanted, rather than 1/2 way around the building, for example.)

The worst mistake I made was when I tried to jump the gap in Kadish to get to the first journey cloth. I had made that jump countless times and very rarely missed, but I managed to fall during the race for a quick panic link back to Relto. D'oh!

In the end, we got to Relto with our Yeesha shirt in 1 hour, 18 minutes. (My practice run the night before had been 1 hour, 16 minutes.)

The team that won was Derek Odell and Brandon Knowles from the QC department. Their time was 1 hour 16 minutes. It was sooo close!

Someone joked that the testers would have an unfair advantage, since they played the game every day. I was fairly certain that Bill and I had a good chance, even if we didn't have as many hours of playing/testing in. We were going to give it our best shot, anyway.

Given that the race was so close, it really could have gone the other way.

Three examples that could have easily changed the outcome:

1) My fall in Kadish. The two extra "link delays" alone made most of the difference. (This one's my fault for not making the jump, or for not playing it safe and going around, depending on your point of view.)

2) The "link delay" time is computer dependent. The team that won had the fastest machine at Cyan at that time (Lloyd's screaming "new" machine). My route required 42 links (44 with my fall in Kadish).

But even at 42 links, shaving just a few seconds off their time for each link more than made up the difference. (So today's computers should be able to beat 1 hr 10 minutes.)

3) They knew one shortcut that Bill and I didn't know about right near the end. We were just a little ahead very near the end. One of the spectators yelled that they were heading through the fissure, and I smiled at Bill because we had already arrived at the Cleft through the fissure), so we were just a few seconds ahead at that point. We knew it was going to be very close, but we thought we had the edge. But that shortcut shaved off about two minutes from their time. It was more than enough to get them into Relto with their Yeesha shirt first. (This one's my fault too for not knowing that little tidbit of information - and yes, I'm being intentionally vague about the shortcut, so I can use it if there's ever another race. 🙂

It really was a great race, even coming in second.

😄

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

The Great Scream

RAWA
Posted: Wed Dec 20, 2006 5:42 pm   Post subject:
Spoiler: The Scream Heard 'Round the Ages

SPOILER WARNING : Blatant OOC discussion ahead. There will be spoilers.

In one of the IC threads,

PaladinOfKaos wrote:

> *There are too many holes to figure out what happened, and I expect that as the DRC opens more of the cavern, more evidence will appear.*

Yes, some things have intentionally not been explained yet to be revealed over time as the DRC and the explorers continue to try to figure them out; other things, however, are side effects of how the event played out on D'mala.

Unfortunately, you really don't have any way to know the difference between the two. So you're likely to reach faulty conclusions because they may be based on faulty assumptions.

For example:

Quote:

> *An eye-witness (or ear-witness) account describing the scream as one of pain moves the blame for the Event away from the Bahro, but doesn't do much to explain what did cause it.*

If the ear-witness was basing their description of the sound as "pain" because it actually sounded like pain to them, then that's ok, but if their interpretation was influenced because they read that the name of the sound file contained "pain", then they're reading too much into the name, because we had to choose between the sounds that were already available on D'mala. We may not have picked that sound it because it was "pain", we may have picked it because it was the "biggest, scariest" bahro sound we had at our disposal.

[Note: Knowing that previous sentence will be picked to death, let me be clear: I'm not saying it wasn't pain; I'm not saying it was pain. I'm just saying don't give more weight to the "pain" interpretation simply because "pain" was in the file name of the sound that was used.]

Another of the issues is the timing of the event itself.

Dr. Kodama's "What the..." was meant to be in response to the sound of the "Incredible Bahro Scream" (tm), but we had triggered the scream, and several seconds had passed without the scream happening. We were worried that the sound wasn't working and that people were going to get linked out without the scream playing (and in fact, none of us at Cyan heard the sound before the link, so it's good that he didn't wait until he heard the sound to "react" to it), but as it was, his reaction to the sound came before those who did hear the sound heard it.

So giving significance to Kodama's reaction coming before the sound is only going to lead you to faulty conclusions as well.

As far as we're concerned, the Bahro scream began, prompting Kodama's reaction, and before the Bahro scream ended everyone was linked to Relto with "something" happening to the Cavern, the lattice, the KIs, the Ages, etc. simultaneously.

I hope that helps sort out things that are unclear because they're not meant to be understood yet from the things that are unclear because of OOC reasons (name of sound, Kodama reacting too soon, etc.)

😃

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

Age Building

RAWA
Posted: Tue Mar 28, 2006 1:09 pm   Post subject:

Papa Smurf wrote:

> *Not to pick on Cyan, but they have said things in the past that have not panned out.*

Unfortunately, that is the way life is. "The best laid plans..." and all that. That is why we're generally very conservative with our announcements, and why we wait much longer to make them than some would like us to. Even when we're finally comfortable that something is likely enough to happen that we announce it, the announcements are usually packed with words like "plan", "intend", etc. Because we're clearly aware that things don't always go the way we think they should. We can't guarantee what will happen in the future, we can only tell you what our plans, intents, and goals are.

Papa Smurf wrote:

> *As for an age a month, I would have to see it to believe it. I would not complain if it turned out that way, but I think before you aim for the stars you first have to pick a reasonable target to practice on.*

I agree with you about picking reasonable targets. The "Age per month" goal was very realistic at the time that Prologue was put to bed. We were fully staffed with artists, programmers, testers, etc. The pipeline was full of Ages at various stages of development. We were absolutely on track for meeting that goal (even a little ahead of schedule)*.

Papa Smurf wrote:

> *Maybe after Uru Live has been up for some time they may be able to sustain an age a month. But not now, and not in the near future IMO.*

That's the key distinction to this discussion. It isn't that an Age per month is impossible (which is how your earlier statements were coming across, I think), it's that it isn't reasonable to expect that right now or in the immediate future.

I absolutely agree with you on that. I attempted to explain this earlier in another thread:

RAWA (in another thread) wrote:

> *We're pretty much in the same position now with Until Uru. There is no new content. That's just the way it is. All the content that we had ready or nearly ready for Live was repurposed for the xpacks and Myst V. The pipeline is (nearly) empty. Even if we get funding tomorrow, the pipeline will take months/years to fill again (depending on your definition of "full"). (That isn't to say that the pipeline has to be "full" before anything new is released, but it won't happen overnight either.)*

We are in the process of filling the pipeline back up, but that's going to take a while. Especially since, at the moment, we don't have as many artists, programmers, and testers as we had during the Prologue.

However, we remain "cautiously optimistic".

😄

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

* Six months is a realistic average for an Age to be designed, modeled, textured, wired, tested and released. Obviously some will take a little longer, some will not take quite as long, but that's a very reasonable average. If we release one Age per month, and each Age takes six months to make, it's pretty easy to figure out that we need to have six Ages in the pipeline at any given time to meet the "one Age per month" goal. When Prologue was cancelled we had eight or nine Ages in the pipeline (it was full) and several others ready to enter the pipeline when it was ready for them.

RAWA
Posted: Thu Mar 30, 2006 10:26 am   Post subject:

numinous wrote:

> *Cautious optimism aside,*

Running with the "optimism" part of "cautious optimism" is fun, isn't it? But in effort to keep a realistic balance between "cautious" and "optimism", I'll respond to the following...

numinous wrote:

this definitely sounds like the funding situation is a little more than just enough to fund a Cyan based server.

Our current funding is enough to keep us afloat. "Just enough to fund a Cyan based server" would not be enough to keep us afloat. 😑

The good news is that we're doing what we can with what we've got. That means new stuff is making its way through the pipeline, though obviously at a slower pace than it did during the Prologue since we don't have as many people here at Cyan to work on production.

The bad news is that there are no guarantees that even our present level of funding will continue. That's really the big issue. If that funding goes away, then everything in development goes away too. Hence the "cautious" part of "cautious optimism".

numinous wrote:

Sounds like we can reasonably expect some new ages for Uru at some point.

If our current funding continues, yes (it'll be in Live eventually). If it doesn't, no (and there won't be a Live at all).

Welcome back to "cautious optimism".

😑

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Thu Mar 30, 2006 2:12 pm   Post subject:

JWPlatt wrote:

I'm wondering how your teams don't let it affect their work and their personal lives. It's hard to do your best or make commitments knowing it could end in an instant and you might not get to complete it; not knowing whether it will matter.

You're right on the money. Our current situation is not one I'd wish on someone.

We get through the day by focusing on the "optimism" in "cautious optimism". We'll do as much as we can with what we have for as long as we have it. At least that way there's a chance that the funding will continue,

Uru Live will return, and we still have jobs here at Cyan.

If we do less than our best then the funding will definitely go away, Uru Live will have no chance, and Cyan's reprieve will have been wasted.

I'll take some chance over no chance. 😬

And arguably knowing up front that things may not happen is better than thinking things are going fine and having things stopped without warning.

😬

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Thu Mar 30, 2006 4:41 pm   Post subject:

numinous wrote:

> *Has Cyan received funding for, and are working on, Something Else (tm), or is this funding JUST for the maybe, perhaps, slight chance of Uru Live?*

So far the funding has been primarily intended for Uru Live.

We've being doing some work for them that's not Uru related (their own projects that were within our areas of expertise).

We have shared Something Else Entirely (tm), Something Entirely Different (tm), Something Even More Than Entirely Different (tm), and a few other of our ideas with them, but they're still most interested in Uru Live.

If they ultimately decide to stop funding Uru Live, it seems unlikely that they will continue funding us for their side projects or any of our other ideas, but I don't know that for a fact. That's up to them.

😬

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Mon Nov 09, 2009 6:43 pm — Post subject:

I'm going to pop in here, only because these posts are contributing to my sense of deja vu. We had this discussion in 2006 (about a year before MOUL began), and I was pretty upfront with trying to provide realistic expectations.

Parts of that post that are relevant to this thread:

Quote:

> *Not to pick on Cyan, but they have said things in the past that have not panned out*

My response in 2006 was, and still is:

Quote:

> *Unfortunately, that is the way life is. "The best laid plans..." and all that. That is why we're generally very conservative with our announcements, and why we wait much longer to make them than some would like us to. Even when we're finally comfortable that something is likely enough to happen that we announce it, the announcements are usually packed with words like "plan", "intend", etc. Because we're clearly aware that things don't always go the way we think they should. **We can't guarantee what will happen in the future, we can only tell you what our plans, intents, and goals are.** (Emphasis added)*

Quote:

> *Maybe after Uru Live has been up for some time they may be able to sustain an age a month. But not now, and not in the near future IMO.*

My responses (small edits for length - yes, it was a bit longer):

Quote:

> *That's the key distinction to this discussion. **It isn't that an Age per month is impossible [...], it's that it isn't reasonable to expect that right now or in the immediate future. I absolutely agree with you on that.** (Emphasis added)*

> *We're pretty much in the same position now with Until Uru. There is no new content. That's just the way it is. All the content that we had ready or nearly ready for Live was repurposed for the xpacks and Myst V. The pipeline is (nearly) empty. Even if we get funding tomorrow, the pipeline will take months/years to fill again (depending on your definition of "full"). (That isn't to say that the*

pipeline has to be "full" before anything new is released, but it won't happen overnight either.)

We are in the process of filling the pipeline back up, but that's going to take a while. Especially since, at the moment, we don't have as many artists, programmers, and testers as we had during the Prologue.

Six months is a realistic average for an Age to be designed, modeled, textured, wired, tested and released. Obviously some will take a little longer, some will not take quite as long, but that's a very reasonable average. If we release one Age per month, and each Age takes six months to make, it's pretty easy to figure out that we need to have six Ages in the pipeline at any given time to meet the "one Age per month" goal. When Prologue was cancelled we had eight or nine Ages in the pipeline (it was full) and several others ready to enter the pipeline when it was ready for them.

Please note my list of tasks for the Age to go through left out major categories in order to fit better with the DRC's five phases that had already been discussed. A more complete list would be something like: design, massing modeling, design check, detailed modeling, texturing, lighting, wiring, animations, feature programming, sound, music, testing, and fixing. I stand by my six month estimate for an average Age. I don't think that's unreasonable at all. Also keep in mind that for MOUL we were starting with an empty pipeline (everything that had been in the pipeline had either been put into TPOTS or modified for Myst V) and less than half the staff we had for Uru.

A detailed explanation of our production pipeline can be found [here](#).

And if you'd like to see time lapses of three of the Myst V Ages during part of development to see part of the pipeline in action (roughly going from massing model stage to texture/lighting stage), you can view them [here](#). Disclaimers: the screenshots for the time lapses were taken where the artists placed their avatar spawn points for getting around the Age quickly during development. Those avatar spawn points were not placed with these time lapses in mind. Click on the top picture of each page to see the movie of the time lapse, click on each picture below for a large view of the highlight(s).

(If you still have questions on Age creation time, go ahead and read those whole threads, rather than just those selected posts - there are more details there.)

New topics in this thread:

"Cut and Paste" Garden Ages - Even if the models were identical (which they're not) you're only cutting out two of the thirteen steps listed above in creating the Age. Yeah, they look similar, and it seems like they "should be able to be done in a few days", because you're only considering modeling time. The problem is that you're neglecting to take into account that they have different design, different textures, different lighting, different sounds, different music, different animations, different puzzles, different wiring, etc. Each of those steps takes the same, or nearly the same amount of time, even if the model itself doesn't change at all. Yes, that was done so we could produce content efficiently with our constraints, but to imply that it was a simple copy and paste and *poof* it was done is not even remotely accurate.

TPOTS Ages - Er'cana, Ahnonay - major re-wiring was required so that multi-player would work in those Ages. Though those Ages were originally designed to be multi-player, we had to cut that functionality out of them when Prologue was cancelled in order to get them done for the single-player expansion packs in the few months we had to make them. The re-wiring for MOUL was not trivial and took months, especially for Ahnonay. That is why they were released so late. It isn't that they were done and waiting for us to arbitrarily release them. They were released when all the work behind the scenes was done. Again - just because something looks the same, doesn't mean that it didn't take any work to get working in MOUL. (See the phase 4b in the "five phases" post about things "looking" done before they're even wired.)

DRC being irresponsible - Um, yeah, they were letting us surface dwellers stay in the cavern and the Ages. If we're going to be pedantic about their archaeological standards, then there is no excuse for "civilians" wandering around freely down there trampling everything in sight, and there is no game. If one really can't suspend that bit of disbelief, then feel free to pretend that the DRC decided to be more responsible and kicked us all out and are still down there doing things "properly". Boy, these past two years have been fun being stuck on the surface, haven't they? Hmm...Hold on a second... The upside if this is that this will greatly decrease production costs. The entire game can

take place at Zandi's trailer with a DRC person coming up once in a while to say how well things are going. Budgetary problems (mostly) solved! Hurrah! 😃

Minkata and Jalak - These two Ages were completely original for MOUL (they had not been designed previously).

Negilahn - The concept was designed for the original Uru Live, and production had started when Prologue was shut down. However, the original design was to be a small space (one pod) but a complex, interactive ecosystem - so it was designed to be low impact on the modelers and high impact on the animators, wirers, etc., because we were going to need that kind of variety of workloads to balance the pipeline in Uru Live. But Negilahn wasn't even close enough to being done to consider putting in the expansions. Then in MOUL, with the "renegade Bahro", the Age was completely redesigned to incorporate the Bahro destruction and the other pods and puzzle surrounding the pods was added. Most of Negilahn's original modeling survived the re-design, but it had to be completely rewired and puzzle elements added, etc. The lack of the original design for Negilahn's ecosystem was now a perfect story fit with the destruction caused by the renegade Bahro. How convenient! Again, for the other pods that were added there's different lighting, scenery, sounds, animations, wiring, etc. for each pod. Are the pods so simple that we could have made countless different versions of them in a few days as stated? No. Were they another efficient use of our limited resources, and could they be done relatively quickly while the larger Ages made their way through the pipeline? Yes. (A realistic average would be roughly one month per pod.)

All that to say that we really did do the best we could with what we had. Just as we always have done, and continue to do to this day. If it doesn't look like it, well, then you're not considering "The Whole", as Ti'ana would say.

😃

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Tue Feb 23, 2010 8:10 pm — Post subject:

MatthewH12 wrote:

> *After seeing all those sketches, it kinda makes me worry how much content Cyan has thrown out, or given up on that had they had been designing for Uru.*

You might want to look [here](#) to get some idea of what was in the pipeline when the first Uru Live was shut down. Long ago, I posted a translation of what the various DRC phases mean describing how far through production they were. Some like Kahlo were suspended for technical reasons, e.g., waiting for technical improvements to be become available. So the Age _looks_ great in screenshots, but none of the gameplay was actually working.

Many of the Ages were ambitious as we were getting ready to ramp up to a larger production staff shortly after launch. That, as we all know, didn't happen. So, the Ages that were very close to being finished were altered slightly to make the Path of the Shell and To D'ni expansions. Other Ages in the pipeline that could be re-purposed and finished with our then current staff were finished for Myst V.

When GameTap brought Myst Online back, it was for a much smaller budget, and we had an even smaller staff than for Myst V. New Ages had to be things we could do with what we had in a relatively short span of time.

But all those older, more ambitious Ages still sit, waiting for the day when we can finish them. Which is why we haven't given up on Uru, and why we repeatedly say that we still have stories to tell here. We haven't given up on these Ages, either. We're just waiting for the resources to do them.

Someday...

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

Age Restoration

RAWA
Posted: Mon Apr 17, 2006 1:12 pm   Post subject:

(*_*) wrote:

> *I saw all 5 phases defined (here's the source:*
> http://www.dpwr.net/archive.php?showarticle=1152*)*

OK. Here are what the phases mean both IC and OOC. There really isn't much difference. If you just read between the lines just a tiny bit, you'll see that the IC phases are nearly identical to the OOC phases each Age goes through.

Phase 1

IC: Initial Mapping - During this Phase, basic maps and documents are created for the Age or location being restored. These documents are later detailed further in phase 3. Dr. Kodama is the head DRC member in charge of this phase.

OOC: Initial Design - During this Phase, basic maps and documents are created for the Age or location being designed. This includes the design of the puzzles and story for the Age. (For an example, here's one of the "Initial Design" maps for Riven, from Robyn Miller's Blog, Feb 22, 2006 entry)

Phase 2

IC: Structural Analysis - All structures and supports are examined for integrity and safety. Dr. Kodama also heads the completion of this phase.

OOC: Massing Model - All structures are made in rough form to show their basic shapes and sizes. Little or no texture/lighting are done at this stage. Most of the

wireframes at the "3D history" site mentioned earlier in this thread are massing models from Uru and/or DIRT.

Phase 3

IC: Detailed Analysis - The Age or location is given a thorough examination by a survey team, which creates extensive maps and additional documentation on the area. Dr. Sutherland is in charge of this phase.

OOC: Detailed Analysis - The Age or location (massing model) is given a through examination by the design team. We can walk around and get a "feel" for the Age and make changes while the Age is still in the early stages. Design documents are updated to reflect any changes in the Age's design.

Phase 4

IC: Restoration - This is the most extensive phase, during which all machinery is repaired, structures are secured, and cleanup is performed. Mr. Engberg is in charge of operations in this phase.

OOC: Detailed Modeling/Wiring - This is the most extensive phase. In fact, when Dr. Watson first explained the phases way back then, he said he could see this one being broken into two parts. IC, it makes sense to refer to both parts as one "restoration" phase. OOC, though, it really is two distinct phases.

Phase 4a - Detailed Modeling - Models are refined to final forms (structures are secured and cleanup is performed), textures are added, lighting is added, etc. Once phase 4a is finished, the Age will "look" complete. If you get a screen shot of something at the end of this stage, you might assume "Hey, it's done. Why haven't they opened it yet?", but there's still a lot to do - it looks great, but nothing actually works yet. (The Kahlo screenshots mentioned earlier in this thread are from Phase 4a.)

Phase 4b - Wiring - This is where everything in the Age is made to "work". Machines, elevators, doors, buttons, levers, triggers, puzzles, game-play, etc. Once phase 4b is done, hopefully everything in the Age works as it was designed. The Age is almost ready, now. (Kahlo was in this phase when it was suspended for technical reasons. Even now, it could end up stuck in phase 4b for a looong time, but I'm "cautiously optimistic" about that, too. 😃

Phase 5

IC: Limited Access - In this final phase before completion, the Age or location is opened for limited access by authorized explorers. Dr. Sutherland oversees the operations of this phase.

OOC: Testing - In this final phase before completion, the Age or location is opened for testing by Quality Control (our in-house testers). They get to hammer on it, find bugs, and send it back to the phase 4 people to make fixes as needed.

Once it's passed Phase 5 inspection, it can be opened to you all.

The phases, both IC and OOC, are not completely isolated. For example, the massing modeling of Age (Phase 2) will probably begin before Design (Phase 1) is 100% finished, so sometimes the Age is actually in two or more different Phases simultaneously, but we generally keep the listing at Phase 1 until Initial Design is complete, even if the massing model has started, then keep it listed as Phase 2 until the Massing model is complete, even if some of the Detail Analysis has started, etc.

As for the current Age list on the DRC site: It was last updated just before the DRC disbanded in 2004. It, like most of the rest of the site, is about two years out of date now. There are places that are open in D'mala that are still listed in earlier phases of restoration. If we get a contract for funding, that's on the list of things to do. Without a contract, there really isn't a point of updating it 'cause it very well could all be shut down again. (Which is the reason for... say it with me now... "Cautious optimism".)

😬

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Mon Apr 17, 2006 1:40 pm   Post subject:

Marten wrote:

1) It seems reasonable that some ages would/should never be opened. It would be suspicious if every age the DRC found and listed was safe for restoration. There are bound to be dangerous ages that will be uncovered and then declared unsafe, and forever locked shut. Therefore, I would assume that some of

the Phase 1 ages below are "flavor text only" in an OOC context.

All of the Ages listed, even at Phase 1, have had at least some design work done on them (OOC). So, they were a bit more than "flavor text only", even if they never see the light of day for whatever reason(s). So as far as the DRC are concerned (IC), the listed Ages at least made it far enough into the mapping phase that they were at least initially intending to restore the Age. They could have many Ages that were immediately recognized as being too dangerous, but those aren't even listed.

😀

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Mon Apr 17, 2006 3:54 pm   Post subject:

(*_*) wrote:

Yes, thanks again for clarifications. Still, weren't we given access when the ages were still in phase 5 in ABM none-the-less?

Yes, Yeesha gave you access to some of the Ages in ABM before the DRC officially "opened" them, so IC, they were still in phase 5, while OOC, they had passed phase 5. A little blurring of the lines for the sake of the story.

(*_*) wrote:

since you said it takes about 6 months to create an age you needed to have at least 6 months' worth of content already done before the Prologue started.

No, six months of Ages didn't have to be done before Prologue opened. In fact, we only needed one Age to be in Phase 5, and other Ages at various phases behind it.

That's part of the beauty of Uru Live... the "pipeline" is very efficient once it's been filled up.

Just for simplicity, let's break phase 4 into two phases, and let's say each phase takes one month. So, there are six stages each taking one month. This fits with the "six months to make an Age" perfectly. It isn't nearly as simple as this in reality (e.g. 6 months for an Age is average, but some take a lot

longer; some phases are longer than others; etc.), but it's close enough for this example.

So, you've got six stages:

Design | Massing Model | Analysis | Texturing | Wiring | Testing

The first month of development Design works on Age A:

Design | Massing Model | Analysis | Texturing | Wiring | Testing
Age A

Not efficient. Everyone but the design team is twiddling their thumbs.

The second month, Age A moves on to the Massing Model stage, and Design starts on Age B design:

Design | Massing Model | Analysis | Texturing | Wiring | Testing
Age B..|......Age A

A little more efficient, but there's still a lot of thumb twiddling going on.

The third month, all Ages move on.

Design | Massing Model | Analysis | Texturing | Wiring | Testing
Age C..|.......Age B...|..Age A...|

Yes, the Design team is working on Age A and Age C here. It's ok. Technically, the design team and the massing modelers are working on all three of these Ages at various times over these three months. There's even a little work for the testers here. But we're trying to keep things simple, remember? 😃 Still, there's too much thumb twiddling going on by the texturers, wirers, and testers.

The fourth month:

Design | Massing Model | Analysis | Texturing | Wiring | Testing
Age D..|.......Age C...|..Age B...|....Age A

Again, we're simplifying. Age A is now being mainly worked on by the Texture/Lighting artist(s), but the wiring guy is getting a few things to work on, and the testers can be doing a bit of work on Ages A, B, and C.

The fifth month:

Design | Massing Model | Analysis | Texturing | Wiring | Testing
Age E..|.......Age D...|..Age C...|...Age B...|.Age A

We're getting there. Only the testers are still "slacking off". 😊

The sixth month:

Design | Massing Model | Analysis | Texturing | Wiring | Testing

Age F..|.......Age E...|..Age D...|...Age C...|.Age B..|..Age A

Hurrah! The pipeline is full. Everyone's busy. Prologue opens. From here on out, barring Uru Live getting canceled during the Prologue (that would never happen, would it?), we are pretty much set up for one Age to be released every month.

Only one Age is in stage 6, one is in stage 5, one is in stage 4, and so on.

We obviously had a great deal more than that in the pipeline back then. And roughly double the number of employees to work on getting things through the pipeline. We were in an excellent position at that time. If only it hadn't been canceled.

By the way, understanding this pipeline idea helps to demonstrate why Myst took two years, Riven took four years, etc. but Myst V could be done in only one year. Even though two of the Ages were completely new, and the other Ages were redesigned to varying degrees (two almost completely), everyone in the pipeline had things to work on pretty much from the start. And that's why content for Uru Live could come out much faster than we can make separate, stand-alone games. Myst V had the advantage of even the small amount of the design we could keep. All the other Myst games started with the pipeline completely empty.

Hope that helps,

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Sat Jun 17, 2006 10:46 pm   Post subject:

Gondar wrote:

I recall a posting on that.. but that was a while back, and I'm too lazy to dig.

Here's what I posted here (it may help to read that thread for context).

OK. Here are what the phases mean both IC and OOC. There really isn't much difference. If you just read between the lines just a tiny bit, you'll see that the IC phases are nearly identical to the OOC phases each Age goes through.

Phase 1

IC: Initial Mapping - During this Phase, basic maps and documents are created for the Age or location being restored. These documents are later detailed further in phase 3. Dr. Kodama is the head DRC member in charge of this phase.

OOC: Initial Design - During this Phase, basic maps and documents are created for the Age or location being designed. This includes the design of the puzzles and story for the Age.

Phase 2

IC: Structural Analysis - All structures and supports are examined for integrity and safety. Dr. Kodama also heads the completion of this phase.

OOC: Massing Model - All structures are made in rough form to show their basic shapes and sizes. Little or no texture/lighting are done at this stage. Most of the wireframes at the "3D history" site mentioned earlier in this thread are massing models from Uru and/or DIRT.

Phase 3

IC: Detailed Analysis - The Age or location is given a thorough examination by a survey team, which creates extensive maps and additional documentation on the area. Dr. Sutherland is in charge of this phase.

OOC: Detailed Analysis - The Age or location (massing model) is given a through examination by the design team. We can walk around and get a "feel" for the Age and make changes while the Age is still in the early stages. Design documents are updated to reflect any changes in the Age's design.

Phase 4

IC: Restoration - This is the most extensive phase, during which all machinery is repaired, structures are secured, and cleanup is performed. Mr. Engberg is in charge of operations in this phase.

OOC: Detailed Modeling/Wiring - This is the most extensive phase. In fact, when Dr. Watson first explained the phases way back then, he said he could see this one being broken into two parts. IC, it makes sense to refer to both parts as one "restoration" phase. OOC, though, it really is two distinct phases.

Phase 4a - Detailed Modeling - Models are refined to final forms (structures are secured and cleanup is performed), textures are added, lighting is added, etc. Once phase 4a is finished, the Age will "look" complete. If you get a screen shot of something at the end of

this stage, you might assume "Hey, it's done. Why haven't they opened it yet?", but there's still a lot to do - it looks great, but nothing actually works yet. (The Kahlo screenshots mentioned earlier in this thread are from Phase 4a.)

Phase 4b - Wiring - This is where everything in the Age is made to "work". Machines, elevators, doors, buttons, levers, triggers, puzzles, game-play, etc. Once phase 4b is done, hopefully everything in the Age works as it was designed. The Age is almost ready, now. (Kahlo was in this phase when it was suspended for technical reasons. Even now, it could end up stuck in phase 4b for a looong time, but I'm "cautiously optimistic" about that, too. 😃

Phase 5

IC: Limited Access - In this final phase before completion, the Age or location is opened for limited access by authorized explorers. Dr. Sutherland oversees the operations of this phase.

OOC: Testing - In this final phase before completion, the Age or location is opened for testing by Quality Control (our in-house testers). They get to hammer on it, find bugs, and send it back to the phase 4 people to make fixes as needed.

Once it's passed Phase 5 inspection, it can be opened to you all.

The phases, both IC and OOC, are not completely isolated. For example, The massing modeling of Age (Phase 2) will probably begin before Design (Phase 1) is 100% finished, so sometimes the Age is actually in two or more different Phases simultaneously, but we generally keep the listing at Phase 1 until Initial Design is complete, even if the massing model has started, then keep it listed as Phase 2 until the Massing model is complete, even if some of the Detail Analysis has started, etc.

As for the current Age list on the DRC site: It was last updated just before the DRC disbanded in 2004. It, like most of the rest of the site, is about two years out of date now. There are places that are open in D'mala that are still listed in earlier phases of restoration. If we get a contract for funding, that's on the list of things to do. Without a contract, there really isn't a point of updating it 'cause it very well could all be shut down again. (Which is the reason for... say it with me now... "Cautious optimism".)

Gondar wrote:

> *But, what it does imply.. are the people who do the*
> *various tasks then the players for said characters?*
> *Implying Marie Sutherland is played by one of the*
> *texture artists or something?*

Then again, are they played by one dedicated person
(easier to keep a cohesive personality) or a group
(easier to allow them to be around any given time)

Do you really want the answers to these?

😬

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

Uru

Guild Structure and Rank

OK. Here's a bit of info on the guild structure.

Not to add to the confusion, but this is an error in the Book of Ti'ana.

The sentence on page 157 should read:

"*The six assistant _Guild_ Masters, and the Grand Master...*"

Editor's Note:

The phrase in The Book of Ti'ana says, "The six assistant Grand Masters and the Grand Master." This had led fans to believe that there was a Guild designation of Assistant Grand Master. RAWA corrected that misimpression as follows.

- - - -

There were many Guild Masters in each of the Guilds, but only one Grand Master for each Guild. Only a handful of the Guild Masters in each Guild were elected to the Council. The others had supervisory roles in their Guild or could be assistants to the Grand Master of their Guild.

The Great Lords were Grand Masters long before they were promoted. The Great Lords were still often referred to as Grand Masters of their Guild, though, this isn't their accurate title. Their title was simply Great Lord, and a new Grand Master was appointed to take their place in their Guild.

When a Great Lord died, a replacement could come from any of the eighteen major Guilds. The list given here (Writers, Miners, Books, Ink-Makers, and Maintainers - pg. 55) is a list of the five Guilds represented at this point in D'ni history.

How the replacement was chosen, whether it was seniority, age, popularity, some kind of vote, or another method, is not clear from what we currently know of D'ni history. My opinion is that it was probably a vote among the members of the High Council, but I could be wrong.

I feel that there were 18 GMs on the High Council, plus the Five Great Lords because of the way they are referred to sometimes in BoT.

You are correct again. The 18 Grand Masters are separate from the 5 Great Lords. So if you still count the Great Lords as Grand Masters (I do not, though David Wingrove often did), then you would say there are 23 Grand Masters.

Hope that helps.

Shorah,

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

Uru or Myst

RAWA
Posted: Fri Dec 22, 2006 2:22 pm   Post subject:

I read this when it was posted, but didn't have time to respond right then and then it left my little brain.

JWPlatt wrote:

> *As much as I like, and will probably always think of it as, Uru Live, I prefer Myst Online. Myst is the Universe. Uru is a place within it.*

Myst is just a tiny piece of a much larger story. So, I personally don't care for everything D'ni related being labeled "Myst: the blah of blah". Many others here have similar feelings. Which is why we fought so hard to have "Riven" called just "Riven". It was nothing against Myst. We loved Myst, but Riven simply wasn't a story about Myst Island.

Of course, RedOrb's marketing was never going to allow Riven to be released without capitalizing on Myst's name recognition, so we eventually compromised the title to "Riven: The sequel to Myst", and the deal was that on the next printing of the box, the subtitle would be much smaller, and on the third printing (once Riven had time to make its own name for itself) the subtitle would be gone completely. Of course, RedOrb was bought out shortly after Riven's release, and "The Marvelous Vanishing Subtitle" never happened.

Quote:

> *I remember during the first go-round in 2003/2004*
> *how I perceived Cyan as trying to distance itself*
> *from Myst by relentlessly using the Uru name and*
> *actually saying "Uru is not Myst." [snip] When*
> *entertainers show a public disdain and seem*
> *ungrateful for the things we love about them and got*
> *them where they are, it cheapens and trivializes our*
> *own image of ourselves for all the time, energy, and*
> *effort we put into being a fan. It doesn't feel good.*

There were several additional factors necessitating
making the distinction between the Myst series and
DIRT/Parable clear back then.

First, we knew that the experiences would be completely
different, and that people who had gotten used to Myst
and Riven (Myst III and Myst IV, not only didn't exist
yet, they weren't even intended) as single-player, pre-
rendered experiences may not be open to a real-time,
multiplayer "Myst". And there were enough people that
were so vocal about it, that this reason alone would
have been enough of a reason to make a clear
distinction between the two. We knew that many who came
to "Parable" expecting "Myst" or "Riven" were bound to be
disappointed.

Second, RedOrb (the publisher) had changed hands five
or six times in the years after Riven. We were
attempting to fund and publish DIRT/Parable ourselves.
So to avoid any legal complications, it needed to be
clear that this was not another sequel to Myst. We
intentionally weren't going to be using any of the
characters or places from Myst or Riven. And we didn't
want the fans to start referring to it as a sequel and
giving the publisher any ideas or grounds to lay claim
to it. So we were pretty blatant at explaining that
DIRT/Parable/Mudpie would not be a sequel to Myst.

But, as with Riven, the scope of DIRT expanded and we
knew our Myst and Riven money wasn't going to be enough
to finish the project. Clearly we were going to need a
partner. After what seemed like decades of stops and
starts with various potential partners, it ended up
mainly being between Ubisoft and Turner. Right up until
the very end of hammering out negotiations, it looked
like it was going to be Turner (if only we could turn
back the clock 😃, but in the "eleventh hour" there was
a merger between Turner and AOL, and they suddenly had
other things that they had to deal with and dropped out
of the running.

So we ended up back with Ubisoft. Using "Myst" wasn't a legal problem any longer, in fact, they were obviously pushing for "Myst Online" to be the title. We were still fighting for more of a distinction, finally compromising on "Uru: Ages beyond Myst", echoing the compromise of Riven's name.

Of course, all of that was before Uru Live was taken away from us.

Now, the distinction concern is still just as valid to me. It is still true that Uru really is not Myst. And the fact remains that many who liked a "Myst-like" experience will not like an "Uru-like" experience, and I'd rather that those people not think that we tried to "trick" them into playing Uru. But... I'm willing to compromise on that if "Myst Online" gives Uru even a slightly better chance of not being taken away from us again. I'm selfish that way. 😃

So, the name has nothing to do with any distain for Myst. We tried to be very clear on that as far back as Mysterium 2001 in Carlsbad, when I first gave the explanation of Myst being a tiny piece of a much larger story, and that we were working on telling another part of that story. Complete with fancy ASCII diagram in an email to the Lyst.

😃

Hope that helps,

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

Explorer Choices

RAWA
Posted: Thu Mar 02, 2006 12:28 pm   Post subject:

JWPlatt wrote:

> *There are no specific, physical mechanisms within the puzzles and eventual endgame which force choices all along the way to express the path you are taking.*

That is incorrect. Uru already had many mechanisms built in to express various "paths" you could take. Some, such as the Yeesha shirt, were blatant (she came right out and told you it was a way to show you supported her) and temporary and could be easily

reversed if you changed your mind. Others were blatant and more permanent, (harder to change, if you could change them at all). Others were subtle and temporary. Others were subtle and more permanent.

The choices you make matter, even if their effect isn't always immediately apparent.

JWPlatt wrote:

> *There are no consequences for your character within the game for a path taken, and you could decide to change your role at a whim – DRC one day and Yeesha the next.*

That is also incorrect. There were and will be (if Live ever begins (cautious optimism)) consequences for your character (and the cavern) for the choices you make. Some are blatant. Some are subtle. Some are really subtle.

Choose wisely.

😁

RAWA

PS – (After reading the posts made while I was typing this post up) Choosing Yeesha was not a vote for "closing the Cavern".

RAWA

CYAN – Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Thu Mar 02, 2006 1:58 pm   Post subject:

JWPlatt wrote:

> *I saw some mention somewhere of the Yeesha shirt being useful to discover Easter Eggs, but I was unaware of it somehow affecting gameplay. Care to elaborate?*

In Prime, no it didn't affect gameplay (other than those eggs). In Live, it would have.

The specifics I'll leave to your imagination. I've already been way too blatant about it for my liking. 🙂

RAWA

CYAN – Richard A. Watson

JWPlatt
Posted: Thu Mar 02, 2006 2:32 pm   Post subject:

RAWA wrote:

> *JWPlatt wrote:*
>
>> *I saw some mention somewhere of the Yeesha shirt being useful to discover Easter Eggs, but I was unaware of it somehow affecting gameplay. Care to elaborate?*
>
> *In Prime, no it didn't affect gameplay (other than those eggs). In Live, it would have.*
>
> *The specifics I'll leave to your imagination. I've already been way too blatant about it for my liking.*
>
> *RAWA*

Let's see if I can imagine an example of how roleplaying could affect gameplay:

The more people we can convince to wear Yeesha's shirt, the brighter the Cavern becomes. Upon sufficient illumination, once dark passages in various places become passable for the first time and open up access to new linking books and ages. This makes large-scale collaboration necessary, implements the huge potential of "Live" (cautious optimism) and allows the group, the population, to become part of the solution as a whole. Now THAT's the Myst spirit! Why, that might already have been built into Uru since "Live" (cautious optimism) days and we don't even know it!

How's that?

I'm simply amazed I didn't think of it before you! You guys at Cyan are awesome.

RAWA
Posted: Thu Mar 02, 2006 2:50 pm   Post subject:

Now you're starting to see why Live (cautious optimism) means so much to us. Cause "lighting the Cavern" (to use your example) is just the tip of the iceberg.

😃

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Fri Mar 10, 2006 1:35 pm   Post subject:

JWPlatt wrote:

> *Vaguely. Besides acknowledging there were plans to*
> *place role play hooks into gameplay, he also*
> *"blatantly" claimed some subtle things indeed*
> *already exist.*

Yes, there were quite a few already there - things that
you could do in Prime-Live (whether you played the
Prime Ages in Live or imported your Prime progress into
Live) that would have had varying degrees of effect in
Live. But "Live" never happened for you to see what the
effects would have been. It's a huge shame, really. 😃

JWPlatt wrote:

> *I'd just like to know about them.*

Sorry. Not gonna do it. If Live gets a second chance
(cautious optimism), it will be much better for you all
to discover them yourselves than for me to give you any
more specific info about them now. Even the fact that
I've told you that they're there could have side
effects, and my justification for it in my own head is
that Yeesha already told you they were there, so I
haven't really given you any information that you
didn't already have. (Let me live in my delusion,
please.) 😉

JWPlatt wrote:

> *I would sign up to Uru Live (cautious enthusiasm)*
> *for cooperative gameplay, but not for political*
> *roleplaying. RAWA also seems to agree in one of his*
> *responses to a post of mine that creating conditions*
> *which pit us against each other is not desirable -*
> *or fun. That is partly how I chose my example of*
> *"lighting the Cavern" through large-scale*
> *cooperation. I would like to see our roleplaying*
> *choices, both personal and as a population,*
> *manifested in gameplay rather than directly on other*
> *players. How the game responds could very well*
> *affect the choices of others, but the game remains*
> *the catalyst rather than politics.*

Personally, I would love for the explorers to work
together and cooperate on nearly everything (there are
exceptions where competition is desirable - your 'heek
rank, for example). But I don't think that's a
realistic expectation. We've already seen that there
are some who insist on "swimming against the stream."

To continue with the example of lighting the cavern...
there are going to be those who, for whatever their
reasons, aren't going to want the cavern lit. They're

going to complain if we don't provide a way for them to express their "path".

So I guess my question is "Do you want to be forced to work together?", or, to put it another way, "How much power do you want?"

Wait. Don't answer here. I'll start up another thread for that discussion.

JWPlatt wrote:

> *I have faith that Cyan will choose the benevolent "path" rather than manufacture divisions among its subscribers.*

We have no need to manufacture divisions. You all do that just fine by yourselves. 😃

JWPlatt wrote:

> *There is also, I think, some truth in the irony in that Uru, a game where it is said a "path" must be chosen, has no such endgame choices where all the others do.*

Prime was setting up Live, plain and simple. The paths were not in Prime. The paths were in Live.

And since Uru was an on-going experience, there was no "restore", so the "alternate endings" that the Myst games have didn't really make sense in Uru.

😃

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Fri Mar 10, 2006 4:24 pm   Post subject:

JWPlatt wrote:

> *I think Uru Live (co) with continually expanding content will relieve a lot of pressure.*

I agree.

😃

RAWA

PS - Apologies for taking your quote out of context to make a joke. 😃

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

The Larger Picture

RAWA
Posted: Fri Mar 09, 2007 1:48 pm   Post subject:
Setting Expectations

This topic is jumping off from Anna Catherine's post in another thread.

Anna Catherine wrote:

> *The thing is, though, that low-key Uru is very different from what the game marketing led us to expect. "Destruction is coming. Find a way. Make a home." That sounds like something pretty epic and dramatic is coming.*
>
> *[snip]*
>
> *People are waiting because they were told to wait. They were told something is "coming." If that's true, great. If not... I suggest Cyan try to find a way to convey that to the players who are expecting it. People need to have realistic expectations... whatever that entails.*

I don't think many people are really surprised to discover a disparity between "marketing" and "reality" in any setting (not just Uru), so setting one's expectations based solely (or even mainly) on marketing is very likely to be setting oneself up for disappointment. I have been trying to help people to set more realistic expectations since these forums reopened in 2005. The DRC have tried to do the same in more IC ways.

But I do understand that the subtle reminders of "reality" are easily drowned out by the bullhorn of "marketing", so let me try to be clearer.

Short answer:

The marketing line "Destruction is coming. Find a way. Make a home." is accurate, but those words by themselves give no sense of scale. That phrase is not something that is going to be fulfilled overnight. Or in a week. Or in a month. Maybe not even a year. It's a glimpse at a "bigger picture", small pieces of which are already showing up in Uru.

Long answer:

"What do you see, Atrus?"

Throughout Atrus' childhood, his grandmother Anna repeatedly reminded him to consider "The Whole", the "big picture".

Well, imagine the big picture of The D'ni Story. The story told in Myst is a single pixel in that picture. Riven is another. Uru is another. Zoom in on one of those pixels, and you find that it's not just a single pixel. It's a full picture on its own, and if you zoom in on that, you find that it is also made up of smaller pictures. (Similar to this recursive photo mosaic, only with an end at some point. Or, perhaps this movie demonstrating the powers of ten is a more applicable example.) When we're fully zoomed in, the pixels of that picture are the actions of individuals. What you do can have an effect, even if it may not be immediately apparent when you zoom back out a few levels. Over time, the accumulation of even those small effects will become more and more noticeable from greater distances.

Let's bring this analogy back to Uru. Uru's "'Whole' picture" is made up of pictures from Uru: Ages beyond Myst, Prologue, the expansion packs, and now, Myst Online, among other things. Each of those are made up of smaller pictures for, say, each of the Ages. And so on.

The majority of your time spent in Uru is at the most zoomed-in level. Your individual actions, reactions and interactions matter and have the most visible effect at this level. Examples of things at this level are things like the interactions with the DRC members, or even the recent vigil for Yeesha. Since you're zoomed in to the highest level of detail, even a single person's actions can noticeably affect the picture, gradually changing the color of one pixel at a time, to extend the picture/pixel analog a bit. Events on this level of detail might only last a few minutes or days. Taken individually they may not seem like much, but some may have consequences that last long into the future. Collectively they eventually do have an impact on the bigger picture.

In the middle scales are things like the Ages. They are less flexible and require more effort to have a noticeable effect. At this level, there may be opportunities for the interactions of groups of players to gradually change the colors of the pixels of the picture over longer periods of time. We didn't really get to see many of these in Uru in 2004, but the hypothetical example that has been used several times before is the lighting of the lake: a gradual process

that would take weeks or months to accomplish that has a fairly noticeable effect on an Age.

Zoomed out to one of the larger scales are pictures that are revealed over longer periods of time. Things at this scale are the most resistant to change. Player interaction may be able to slightly change the shade of a few of the pixels a bit, but for the most part, the picture when viewed from this scale may not change much at all. An example I've used before of one of the bigger pictures planned for 2004 was going to be the gradual revelation of the Bahro. Imagine everything that you learned about the Bahro in Myst V being gradually discovered over the course of at least a year rather than over the very short period of time covered in Myst V. A little glimpse at some point that they are able to link at will. Weeks later something in another Age demonstrating that they can affect the weather of the Age. Sometime later in another Age a clue about their fear of the snakes of Noloben. And on and on, so that the picture of the Bahro is slowly filled in as time passes.

"Destruction is coming. Find a way. Make a home." is a "big picture" kind of thing. Right now, that picture is mostly obscured for you. But that picture, too, is gradually being filled in over time, and if you view that picture as a jigsaw puzzle, you've already been given a few pieces.

So... all that explanation to get to a point where we can better set realistic expectations.

You can expect new opportunities to make an impact on the most zoomed-in scale to become available all of the time. Most of them will be simple interactions that you have with other players. Some will be interactions with the DRC, new Ages as they are opened, etc.

At the next level out are things like calibrating the Great Zero or lighting the lake. You can expect new opportunities for you to have a direct effect at this level come less frequently, though as explained earlier, you have an indirect effect at this level all the time through the accumulation of the effects you're having at lower levels.

Further out, with things like "Destruction is coming. Find a way. Make a home.", you can expect new opportunities to have major impact at this level to be very rare, but you can expect your understanding of these "bigger pictures" to be gradually filled in over time.

To go back to part of the quote I started this with:

Quote:

> *People are waiting because they were told to wait.*
> *They were told something is "coming."*

Big things are coming, but that doesn't mean you have nothing to do but wait in the meantime. Medium things are coming more often, and smaller things are coming all of the time. Some of them will be things that interest you. Some will not. Find the things that you like and do something with them while you're waiting for bigger things.

Hope that helps.

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Fri Mar 09, 2007 3:07 pm   Post subject:

Gondar wrote:

> *Which would mean that all our sit-ins and such*
> *actually have a difference, but only in the point of*
> *shifting the arrangement of these little points, and*
> *it still fits into the greater scheme.*

To some extent, yes. But we are also allowing for examples like the Yeesha vigil that were not planned by us at all, but are now woven into the story and have in some ways affected where parts of the story go from here.

Quote:

> *I guess I'm just hoping us fans and explorers can go*
> *and shift enough of the picture to make it ours too,*
> *not just Cyan's... as opposed to changing the little*
> *parts and the big story is all given.*

I tried to be careful to be clear that the bigger the picture is, the more effort it takes to change it (the cumulative effect of the changes at lower levels), but not that it can't be affected by the explorers at all.

I admit that the analogy is not 100% accurate for every scenario that can be thrown at it, and I toyed with several other analogies to varying degrees of success as I've worked on this post off and on for the last two weeks or so. Of all the directions I went, this one ended up seeming to work the best, so this is what I

settled on. Please forgive the places where the analogy breaks down.

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Fri Mar 09, 2007 3:24 pm   Post subject:

Kedri wrote:

So you admit we'll be lighting the lake! :shock: 8)

Don't get too excited.

I wrote:

but the hypothetical example that has been used several times before is the lighting of the lake:

I admit that it is hypothetically possible that the players might conceivably eventually be given an opportunity to have a chance to gradually cause an effect on the level of the light of the lake.

Maybe.

😜

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Fri Mar 09, 2007 4:03 pm   Post subject:

Zardoz wrote:

I have only one question: If you get kidnapped by aliens, who will then become the PixelMaster? Maybe we should get Lloyd's of London to issue some Pixel Insurance . . .

I am flattered by the implication that I, one PixelMaster of many, would warrant such insurance.

If I am in some accident or were to have a sudden and/or mysterious disappearance, the executor of my estate will be given instructions to set the CO meter to black.

Beyond that, the other PixelMasters will carry on without me, promoting one of the PixelCaptains to PixelMaster to take my place. Some of my pixels would be lost, for each PixelMaster has a unique perspective of the "Big Picture", and no other PixelMaster will

have precisely the same pixels as I have, which might be sad for some. On the bright side, it is entirely plausible that the next PixelMaster might bring pixels to the picture that some people would like more than mine.

Such is the way of things.

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Fri Mar 09, 2007 4:49 pm   Post subject:

BladeLakem wrote:

> *RAWA, would you be willing to post this over on the MO:UL forums? We have a few active threads on this sort of thing, and not everyone comes over here, even when links to here are posted.*

Hmm... no. I am obviously not at all up-to-date on the discussions going on in the Myst Online forums, and, in trying to quickly go through those two threads you've pointed to (thanks for the links), I'm not sure that my post really fits well in either of them and, in fact, might derail them, and I like the directions that those threads have already taken.

Another alternative would be to start a separate thread as I did with this one, but I cannot commit to being there to further clarify it as I already have done in this thread, and I am unlikely to see any discussion over there that it generates.

So... you may feel free to quote parts of my post in those threads if you'd like, but I don't plan to post it there in its entirety.

Sorry.

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Tue Mar 13, 2007 1:01 pm   Post subject:

Anna Catherine wrote:

> *I just want to point out quickly that RAWA didn't quote my whole post (of course, since most of it wasn't relevant to this discussion) and I wasn't intending to be a naysayer at all. I mentioned*

> *several times that I was enjoying Uru. I find there*
> *are plenty of things to do.*

Indeed, you were perfectly clear on that in your
original post (Thanks!). When I started responding to
your post it was just going to be a response in that
thread and people could have more easily seen your post
in context. But as my response got longer and drifted
further away from being just a response to your post I
decided to start a separate thread with it. I'm sorry
that I misrepresented your position by not going back
and adding more context to your quote. That was not my
intent.

Quote:

> *Is a game intro marketing or part of the game?*
> *[snip] I (perhaps mistakenly) considered it part of*
> *the game, and my comments on the "Destruction is*
> *coming..." were based on that assumption.*

Oh. The way I read your initial post, I thought you
considered that line to be marketing.

The phrase itself, as I said before, is accurate. So by
itself, it doesn't matter whether it is viewed as a
marketing phrase or as part of the game. However, what
one infers into the phrase based on its context can
change how the phrase is interpreted.

Marketing in general tends to be near-sighted, focused
on the short-term, so when marketing says "Destruction
is coming.", I would likely read that as "Destruction
is coming (in the very near future)." Yeesha tends to
be far-sighted, focused on the long-term, so when
Yeesha says, "Destruction is coming.", I would likely
read that as "Destruction is coming (at some
(unspecified) point in the future)."

In that sense, the fact that marketing has latched on
to Yeesha's phrase can give the wrong impression, and I
can definitely understand that people viewing that
phrase strictly from the marketing perspective are
going to be disappointed when destruction doesn't come
overnight. So, my clarification that "Destruction is
coming." is a not a short-term thing was meant to show
that Cyan's understanding of the phrase has been (and
still is) more in line with Yeesha's perspective than
what people just seeing that phrase being used in
marketing might come away with.

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Tue Mar 13, 2007 2:30 pm   Post subject: **Re: Setting Expectations**

joaopedro wrote:

> *Do you mean that, since the Bahro were already "revealed" in Myst 5, this time you won't reveal them like you'd have had back in 2004? Will you simply assume that everyone already knows everything about the Bahro?*

Yes and no.

It will not be exactly the same as in 2004, certainly, but that doesn't mean we assume that everyone already knows everything about the Bahro.

Those who didn't see Myst V or choose not to ask anyone who has will still be surprised when the Bahro do something that they may not have expected them to be capable of doing. It will still be new to them.

The point, though, is that not everything that the Bahro can do will be new for everyone, so on that basis alone it will not have the impact in the Uru of 2007 that it would have had in the Uru of 2004 when no one had ever seen the Bahro do some of the things that the Bahro can do.

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Thu Mar 29, 2007 3:03 pm   Post subject:

Many excellent points to address since I last had a chance to skim the forums and too little time to really do them justice. Apologies in advance.

Mowog wrote:

> *We know that Uru is different from all the other offerings on GameTap, the fact that it's SO different may be a liability*

That's definitely true. Our games have always had that problem. It was just as true the first time we sought funding to help us get Uru off the ground. It's even more true with ideas such as Latus that are even more out-of-the-box. That's one of the things that makes working at Cyan so interesting.

Quote:

> *Some have tried to attribute this gradual unfolding
> to the reduced staff at Cyan, lack of money, and so
> forth.*

To some degree, that's true. Our current situation does
affect the rate at which new content can be generated.
It would be silly to deny that. But that doesn't mean
that if we had more staff and money that the "gradual
unfolding" would be done away with, especially where
the "big picture" is concerned.

Quote:

> *It would be good to know that everything is actually
> moving along according to plan, and that we just
> need to get used to enjoying Uru sip by sip, like a
> fine wine, and not by the bottle like root beer.*

I think all our games going all the way back to "The
Manhole" fall into the "The Journey is the Reward"
category, and all will be more enjoyable when carefully
explored rather than raced through. It's like those who
played Myst and complained that they "beat" it in 12
hours. Yep, it's possible to "beat the game" in a very
short period of time, but you'll only be skimming the
surface of what Myst has to offer.

So, yes, since Uru follows that tradition, it will
likely continue to be something that is best enjoyed
sip by sip rather than guzzled by the bottle.

In that sense, yes, things are going as planned. The
pieces of the "big picture" are intended to be
gradually revealed over time. What more staff would
allow us to do is to generate more "small pictures" and
"medium pictures" for you to look at in the meantime.

That, however, is not meant to imply that even if we
were staffed to the level we wanted to ramp up to in
2004 that we were ever deluded into believing that we
could generate content faster than players could
possibly keep up with. When we picture Uru as a
"journey that never ends", it simply means that even if
you reach the end of what we've released so far,
something new will be available in the near future,
unlike Myst or Riven, where everything you can ever
possibly find has been there from the first time you
inserted the CD, and so nothing entirely "new" is even
possible.

Sh'aeri wrote:

> *I don't want to take any day I can be in Cavern for
> granted. I want to enjoy **every single day** I'm being*

> *given in our wonderful world, so I'm doing it the only way I know how, with my Cavern Family. I'm enjoying their company and getting into all sorts of adventures that aren't solely based on the new things that are being presented to us through storyline or new content. Don't get me wrong, I love the new stuff, I'm just not hanging everything on it. I believe that the Cavern is what we make of it, so if I want to have fun or do something exciting, I make it happen. I remind myself that my personal Journey is up to me! I truly believe that how much I get out of Uru is directly proportional to what I put into it.*

Thank you so much for saying this. I know there are others who share this perspective. I don't know of a better attitude to have to enjoy Uru to its fullest.

Storyteller wrote:

> *Although RAWA's post here was helpful in giving me an idea of how the game development is planned, I'm still bored.*

> *Any comments on that?*

Several, in fact, but my answer is highly dependent on what you want from Uru. (I'm using a general "you" here, not necessarily speaking to you specifically in these examples, Storyteller.)

If you're bored because you want more Ages to explore and you've fully explored the Ages that are currently available, then the only thing you can do is wait for the next Age to be released, explore it completely, and be bored again until the next Age is released. Rinse. Lather. Repeat. No matter how much content we create, you'll always be stuck in this cycle, and the more often we're able to release content will only affect the frequency (how often) the cycle is repeated.

If you're bored because you want different kinds of things to do to fill your time between new Ages (ahyoheek, markers, the Gahreesen Wall, to use examples from Prologue/Until Uru), for now, yes, those things are very limited, but more of these will become available over time. The good news under this scenario is that the number of these "activities" will eventually reach the point where you have enough to choose from to keep from being bored.

If you're bored because there aren't enough things to kill in Uru, then you will probably always be bored with Uru.

If I had more time, I'd spend some of it coming up with other scenarios for why one might be bored with Uru and whether or not Cyan can do anything to assuage one's boredom under that scenario. But the upshot is this: there are different kinds of boredom, some of which can be alleviated by Cyan, others of which cannot. We will continue to do our best with what we're being given to address the kinds of boredom we can.

Will it be as quickly as we or you all would like it to be?

Probably not.

😁

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

Lake Lighting

RAWA
Posted: Thu Jul 08, 2010 7:03 am — Post subject:

kaelisebonrai wrote:

> *but don't just tell us "it does light the lake, trust me"*

It does light the lake. Trust me. [I don't check the lake's pellet points every day (with a few exceptions for server outages and the like) for my health.]

But as I said during the GameTap days... it's a biiig lake, and the algae has been "mostly dead" for a looong time - so expecting immediate feedback is probably going to lead only to disappointment. Such is life. The lake lighting project, as I have also said in the past, should be viewed as a "long term" project, measured in months and years, not days and weeks. If that isn't your cup of tea, that's fine, but that's <u>this</u> cup of tea.

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Fri Jul 09, 2010 8:07 am — Post subject:

A few more clarifications:

1) My previous post was not in character.

2) My previous post wasn't intended to give "new" information, just confirm that previous information I had given is still accurate and refute the inaccurate information that the pellets "don't do anything".

3) That said, if baking pellets isn't your thing, don't do it. It's ok. No guilt necessary or wanted.

4) If contributing to a long term, community project is your thing, or if you just like trying to find the ultimate pellet recipe, great! Here's your chance. The pellets matter even now, despite the claims to the contrary.

5) If you're doing it because you want/expect/desire a large reward on the level of when the Great Zero was first calibrated, I'll save you some disappointment - don't bother. The lake lighting falls more into the "The journey is the reward" category. Again, if that's not your thing, feel free to ignore the pellets. No harm done. Just please don't tell people that "they don't do anything", because that is not the case.

Thanks.

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Thu Jan 13, 2011 5:10 pm — Post subject:

Tai'lahr wrote:

> *I really wish Cyan had invested more in this "storyline" to provide us with the ability to investigate the issue in an IC manner and deduce legitimate goals that we could work towards (or against).*

I do, too. In this particular instance, it is unfortunate that I do not control the universe. 😊

A few clarifications (major spoilers within):

1) The lake lighting was designed to be an interactive project over a long period of time (measured in months and years, not days and weeks), and the DRC members were meant to be around to help contribute to the algae research (providing nudges and additional information) as time passed. They aren't

around now, so you're working even more "in the dark" than you were intended to be, but you're doing great. Keep it up, but only if you are so inclined. 😛

2) "Lake Health" is a misleading label for the "Lake Total" number given in the first post of this thread, think of it more as the total "calories" that have been given to the algae since the Cavern reopened. Even though the algae has consumed most of that food in the meantime, that variable is keeping track of the total amount of food deposited since the beginning. Because of the confusion inherent in this number, it was not intended for public display.

3) Though there are repeated claims that there is absolutely no effect in the Cavern, that is not the case, even today. It is true that nothing in the client does anything with that "total calories" number. It was never intended to... directly. The lake lighting project is much, much more complex than "We've given the lake x amount of food since the beginning, so the light level should be y."

In fact, every day that number is entered into an "algae simulator" which then determines what effects it had on the algae colonies that day based on the number of calories that were provided that day, that week, etc.

At the time the Cavern closed, there wasn't enough "live" data for me to want to lock down the algae simulation. It was being done by me offline, and the effects in the Cavern were to be done by hand by me, with the idea that it would some day be able to be automated once I felt the simulation was ready to be locked down.

As it is, the algae simulation is still done by me offline based on the daily pellet contributions. The simulation has been adjusted a few times to make it more forgiving, based on the "live" data collected this past year. The effects in the Cavern are still updated by me by hand, when necessary.

[Note: Since the lake lighting project is still in progress, further details of the simulation will not be released. Thanks in advance for resisting the urge to ask for them. 😛]

4) The effects on the lake are subtle, and they are not analog. There are a very limited number of states for the lake light, so the light level in the Cavern is only intended to be changed at specific light level thresholds.

[Aside: This was the major problem with the "Dalek" meter by the lake. The number it reported represented the number of the current lake light threshold, so it would have been months before it ever changed. It was actually counterproductive, as it didn't show any of the progress between those thresholds. "Hey, we've been putting in pellets for weeks, but the number on the Dalek isn't increasing at all." IC response, "Oh, the meter is broken, we'll try to fix it at some point." which is a very rough translation of the OOC reality, "It was really just meant to provide evidence that the DRC are tracking the light levels, not to provide immediate, short-term pellet feedback; which it cannot do because the algae simulator is not locked down, and the server currently only has that threshold number available to look at."]

The lake light "threshold" has been updated (raised and lowered) as necessary several times this last year. The effect in the Cavern is visible today. No code update required, as I have stated in previous posts.

5) When the Cavern closed, the lake lighting project was very low priority. The first light threshold was still months away at the earliest, and there were many higher priorities to work on in the meantime. The original intent was for there to be more significant changes at the various light levels. But those updates were never made. Such is life.

What we have available now, as I have said before, is not flashy like the Great Zero activation. It is very subtle and only visible from specific vantage points, but what I have to work with is there and working right now. But if you're doing it for a giant visual reward, you'll be disappointed.

I know I'm repeating myself from previous posts on this subject, but it bears repeating that this is definitely a "the journey is the reward" type of project. If that isn't your cup of tea, I'm definitely ok with that. Do something else that you enjoy more. Please.

However, if you want to contribute to a long-term, group effort project, keep it up, you're doing great! 😃

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

The Cleft

heimdall
Posted: Sat Mar 06, 2010 11:06 pm — Post subject: **Myst Reader vs. URU: Where is the cleft?**

I didn't read the 3 Myst Books until long after I started to play Myst URU.

Both the landscape and the sign at your starting point indicate that the Cleft is truly in New Mexico.

However, in the Myst Reader (specifically, the Book of Atrus and the Book of D'ni), there were enough context clues to indicate that the Cleft was somewhere in or near Arabia.

I have read enough on the Internet to believe that the "true" location of the Cleft is in New Mexico.

If that is so, then does it mean that details in the Myst Books are not to be treated as canon? I mean, if I see a discrepancy in the location of the Great Shaft, then what other discrepancies can there be?

Heimdall

RAWA
Posted: Wed Mar 10, 2010 10:53 pm — Post subject:

The Cleft was already known to be in New Mexico when I started working here at Cyan in 1992, and I was first learning D'ni history from Rand. It's important for it to be there for back-story reasons. Just one simple example: Rand and Robyn lived in New Mexico growing up; they never lived anywhere near the Middle East. Other reasons for the Cleft in New Mexico are out there, but still have not been discovered, so I'll leave it at that.*

Robyn's original short story written long before Myst had Anna and Atrus living in a nondescript desert in a nondescript location, and that was carried over to the outline for the Book of Atrus. When the first draft came in from David Wingrove, I flagged the additional information that now implied a middle eastern location for the Cleft as details that needed to be made more vague. I was overruled. A nondescript desert was not as interesting, and the difference in location could be attributed to "artistic license" since, even back then, the novels were intended to be "based on Catherine's

journals" (a fact which the introductions and acknowledgement sections of those novels make reference to).

This revelation that Myst, Riven and the novels were fictionalized accounts of a larger story tied into the To D'ni story that was taking place on Cyan's website at the same time during Riven's development. To D'ni (not to be confused with the "To D'ni" expansion pack for Uru) played out over time on a hidden portion of the cyan website from '95 to '97, ending with one "winner" who got a beta copy of Riven before the game was released. When you entered that area of the website, the words "To D'ni" in the D'ni font ("b'D'ni") flashed on the screen. That same phrase in the D'ni font was hidden in the background during several interviews that Rand and Robyn gave during Riven development.

In this light, the change of the Cleft's location could be seen as intentional misdirection by the people who wanted the D'ni story told. This fed Zandi's irritation with Cyan's amount of "artistic license" when he visited Mysterium in 2001. It later tied into the "Preafter" story with Zandi (2002-2003). Enough of the "actual details" of that story were given in Myst, Riven and the novels to those who would be "Called" by them, and there was enough "fiction" for anyone else to just dismiss them, as briefly alluded to by Zandi in his introduction in the Cleft.

Looking at the big picture of the D'ni story, the change of the Cleft location for the novels is now as much a part of the story as any other facet.

Do I wish my notes to remove the Middle Eastern references from the novels had been heeded the first time? Only for the selfish reason that it would make my life simpler not having to repeatedly explain the reasons for the supposed "later change TO New Mexico" since Uru was released. 😬 But for the bigger picture of the D'ni story, I have to admit it makes a great deal more sense for the location to be wrong in the novels for the reasons given above.

So, where is the Cleft? It depends on how deeply you want to dig into the D'ni story.

Those who played Myst and Riven as self-contained games: Cleft? Who cares where it is? It isn't in the games.

Those who dug deeper and read the novels: The Cleft is probably somewhere in the Middle East.

Those who have dug deeper still and participated in the online/real-world stories (To D'ni and Preafter): The Cleft is in New Mexico and always has been. Reports to the contrary were mis-direction by those who didn't want D'ni discovered by any except "the Called" who would be able to find it even with the mis-direction.

This is all well and good, until we get to Uru, which is the story of those "Called" going to D'ni (as Zandi tells you at the Airstream). That being the case, Uru has to take To D'ni and Preafter into account, because the "Called" only exist at that deepest level, even though Uru is available to those who didn't dig that deeply for whatever reason. Those people will have to decide how they want to resolve the paradox: learn more about the larger story of D'ni, or dismiss it as "retcon". I would love it if people would choose the former, but am resigned to the fact that most will choose the latter.

Hope that helps,

RAWA

* No, I won't give any hints. The rock-cutter is patient. I waited seven years for the connection between the D'ni letters and numbers to be discovered by the fans. Other "seeds" have been planted that may never be discovered. I'm ok with that. 😃

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

The DRC

pokemon71096
Posted: Thu Nov 25, 2010 1:37 pm — Post subject: **Proof that many DRC members were played by one person**

> *Marie Sutherland*
> *DRC Member*
> *Joined: 02 Mar 2002*
> *Posted: Tue Dec 02, 2003 3:32 am   Post subject: Meeting*
>
> *I had a conversation with an explorer named Knottyboy today, I mentioned before that we need to have a meeting about Douglas. After today's discussion I still believe we need to have this meeting.*

Michael

JWPlatt
Posted: Fri Nov 26, 2010 4:40 am — Post subject:

Gondar wrote:

> *However, is anyone reminded of the Cate gender mismatch that happened in MOUL?*

Hehe!

Marie Sutherland too!

Quote:

> *(01/03 20:40:23) Cate Alexander claps his hands*
>
> *...*
>
> *(01/03 20:40:37) Marie Sutherland claps his hands*

http://mystonline.com/forums/viewtopic.php?t=5195 (Cate Alexander in A Beginner's Bevin 01/03/07)

RAWA
Posted: Fri Nov 26, 2010 7:19 am — Post subject:

Or it proves that they had access to the same computer and Marie forgot to log out from the site and Michael didn't check who was logged in before entering his post.

Always a conspiracy....

😄

As for the clapping, for some reason, the KI seems to think that all custom avatars are male, even if the original avatar for that character was a female. So, yeah, Marie, Cate, Yeesha, etc. learned to avoid doing emotes other than /me.

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

Eder Delin

ghaelen
Posted: Sun Mar 18, 2012 5:16 pm — Post subject: **The green grass of Delin**

Uru

OK, so it's not all green. There are some colorful flowers and leaves in there, too. But the snow is getting dirty, methinks, & 'twould be a nice thing to let some spring flowers poke their wee faces through the ground. Spring is coming and my feet are itching to be out of these shoes!

Any chance in getting some melting temps in Delin soon? /lookhopeful

RAWA
Posted: Thu Mar 22, 2012 10:51 am — Post subject:

(paraphrasing the 25 year old TV commercial...)

"I'm not a meteorologist, but I play one in Eder Delin."

While Eder Delin is not on Earth and would not necessarily be expected to follow the timing of our seasons, it seems that Eder Delin isn't too far off the general weather pattern of Chattaroy, Washington, where I happen to reside. 😃

Completely coincidentally, I'm sure, if I engage in a little "eyewitness weather" and look out my window right now, I see a 1/2 inch of fresh snow with the little flakes continuing to fall at this very moment (we're expected to get about 1 inch accumulation today).

Wearing a more familiar hat of historian, winter in Eder Delin seems to usually end sometime in our April.

Here are the "snowy" periods for recent years:

02/20/07 – 04/05/07 -- a very short winter by Eder Delin standards; starting late, ending early

09/10/07 – 03/06/08 -- an early winter, roughly 6 months long

??/??/08 – ??/??/09 -- this winter was not observed

??/??/09 – 04/21/10 -- start was not observed, but already had snow (not fresh) when I checked on 1/19/10

11/01/10 – 04/20/11 -- "normal" Delin winter from early November to mid-April, a little under 6 months long

11/02/11 – 04/??/12 -- all indications suggest it's going to be another "normal" Delin winter, a little under 6 months long

Enjoy the Eder Delin snow while it lasts. At least we don't have to attempt to drive in it.

😃

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

The Bahro

ireenquench
Posted: September 04, 2006 12:28 pm @ D'ni Jazz Club
forums

Ooops, forgot to come here right away... at Mysterium I
asked RAWA if the Bahro drew the glyphs, and he
answered...:

Yes.

😃

Put that in a spoiler, because the story itself doesn't
completely nail it down to that.

Also, concerning the radiating spiral symbol that can
be found on the back of the Bahro's head, on the Seer
of wisdom bracelet and Esher's "linking hide":

Josh Staub mentioned they mainly put the symbol on the
hide so that it would be deducible what it actually is.
He said it was connected to the Bahro.

I asked: Is it natural, like an organ? He just grinned
and said:

Oh interesting theory.

Later I asked RAWA about that symbol on the back of the
Bahro's head; he said:

I think they were not born that way.

Neat.

Trivia

Myst Game

Chogon
Posted: Tue Jun 16, 2009 9:08 am — Post subject: **Re: List of bugs I've found**

Swarmo wrote:

Anyway, as to the bugs I've found.

1) Even if you haven't returned a single page to either the red or blue book, when you place the 'final' page into a book, it counts as though all of the pages were returned. It loads the cut scene and the game finishes.

This is not a bug and this plays exactly like it does in the original (on the Mac and PC). I don't remember the reasoning, something RAWA could enlighten you on.

The other two bugs are in the 1.1.3 update... that is still "In Review".

Thanks,

Chogon

RAWA
Posted: Thu Jun 18, 2009 6:26 am — Post subject:

Yes, we intentionally made it so that returning the red or blue page from the fireplace automatically finished the Book.

The reasoning in 1993 was that hints were harder to come by than they are now, and if you were able to get those red or blue pages, it was extremely likely that you'd already finished the game the right way at least once and were just wanting to see the endings again.

We were trying to be nice, just as you can go straight to the fireplace after starting a game and get the "good" ending if you already know the fireplace code. We could have made it so that even the "correct" fireplace code didn't work until you'd brought the pages back of at least one color, but we don't like when other games do that, so we didn't.

Hope that helps,

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

Riven Island Names

From: Richard A. Watson
To: Riven Spoiler Lyst
Subject: **Re: [rls] Names of Islands**
Date: Wednesday, November 25, 1998

> *This has probably been discussed before, but I've never been quite sure what the *official* names are for each of the islands (or even if there *is* an official name for each).*
>
> *RAWA, are there "official" names for each island?*

Here's a description I wrote about a year ago:

Each island (or Age in some cases), had a one letter abbreviation.

This being the spoiler lyst, I'm assuming you'll all recognise this diagram enough that further description will be unneeded:
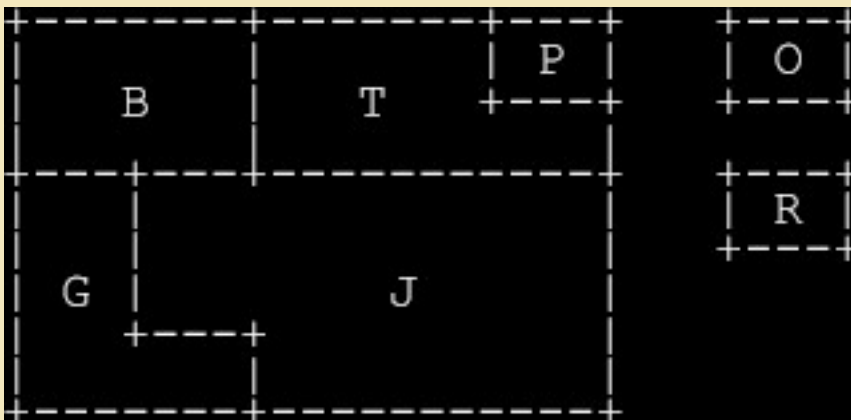
The names used during development:

B = Book (Assembly) Island

T = Temple Island

P = Prison Island

G = Garden Island (though Gehn destroyed the Gardens when he terraformed the plateaus)

J = Jungle Island

O = Gehn's Office (Age 233)

R = Rebel Age (the Hive)

A = All (assets which are needed by multiple Islands)

So when you're snooping through the CD's and you see oDATA, tDATA, etc. you'll know which island's data that file contains...

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

Editor's Note: When Mr. Watson says "snooping through the CD's," he means using one of the Riven Movie Viewer programs to look at the contents of the Data files on the CD's or DVD. These programs are available in the Riven Guild download section.

Age 233

Jim H. wrote:

The bed texture was not made from a palm??!!!!

That was one of the neatest factoids about Riven!

How could two such reliable sources (FMtR and Tony Davidson) be in such blatant contradiction?

Hmm... I think this warrants an official response from someone in the higher-ups of all this.

OK. I've done a bit of research to try to sort this all out.

Richard Kadrey did a good job of telling the tale of the development of Riven, but FMtR does have its share mistakes and inaccuracies.

The paragraph in question sounds like it is based on a talk Richard Kadrey had with Richard Vander Wende. Whether it was RVW who mixed up the story in the telling, or RK who mixed up the description in FMtR, I don't have any idea.

Tony Davidson was the artist who modeled and textured Gehn's bed, so I'm taking his word for it that he knew which texture he used.

So I asked Josh Staub about the scanned hand. Was it used, and if so, did he know where.

Yes. Josh used the texture of RVW's hand for the leather of Gehn's chair (however, the chair wasn't used in Riven).

I got a picture of the unused chair from Josh, so you can see the actual texture for yourself...

http://cho.cyan.com/RAWA/GehnChair.jpg

Shorah,

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

Editor's Note: Here is a copy of the image of the chair to which RAWA was referring above.

Keta

From: Richard A. Watson
To: The Riven Lyst
Subject: **Re: Keta + CO origins**
Date: Friday, November 14, 1997

Who's Keta again is she D'ni?

Keta/Leira was a surface dweller from Earth.

My question now is, what is Cosmic Osmo's lineage?

Cosmic Osmo comes from a long line of semi-reputable Osmoians. He produced one album on which he sang a song his mother taught him. Only one copy of this album is known to exist. It is owned by Cosmic himself, and stored in his Osmobile.

> *"Woba nabongu onogo wabanaba ukoo sokitu mekuku vuto vuto ni"*
>
> *-Mission Control Osmo*

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

Editor's Note: Cosmic Osmo is a Cyan game that was made before Myst. Cyan began to make a colorized updated version of the game, but it's been put on the back burner in favor of other projects.

Date: Tue, 2 Jun 98
From: "Richard A. Watson"
To: "Riven Spoiler Lyst"
Subject: **Re: Keta**

> *That's what I thought too, Age 5. Keta IS Atrus's mom, or at least I think... RAWAAAAAAAAAAAAAA*

Sorry for the long delay, I've been away from Cyan for over a week and my mailbox is very full... I haven't replied to many messages, just because I've got over 500 to go through, but I did want to clear this one up...

Yes. Keta is Atrus's mother. She is human.

How's that?

😄

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

Canon

Ireenquench
Posted: Sun Apr 30, 2006 10:35 am   Post subject: **What is real, what is docu-fiction?**

Concerning the IC perspective, what is real, what is docu-fiction? What can be considered as canon?

I know this question has been discussed over and over, but I'd like to pose it again. Especially with TH meetings coming up it would be nice to know, in order to ask the right questions there.

Ok, so Uru AbM and everything that happened in Prologue is real (in an IC sense).

What about To D'ni and PotS? Are those (docu-)fiction? A plausible projection made by Cyan after the Caverns closed? Or did the events there really happen and any documents found there are "existing" documents?

This is interesting when we think about what happened to Phil. Can Sharper's second Journal, leaning towards stating Phil's death be accounted as factual? Also concerning Dr. Watson. We've read his Journal in the Eder Tomahn in Great Shaft. Does this Journal exist? Or is it an invention?

This goes further with EoA and extends to the Prima guides. Is that canon or not? To me questions about these products are less "hot" than those concerning the XPacks, but it'd still be nice to know.

Of course this goes mainly to RAWA, but it's a nice discussion topic, too, to get an idea concerning which page we are all on.

RAWA
Posted: Mon May 01, 2006 10:52 am   Post subject:

Talks of "canon" make my head hurt, so I avoid them whenever possible. If I knew the future, it would be another matter. But I don't, so whatever I tell you could be contradicted in the future. That being the case, what's "canon" could change, which completely contradicts the whole concept of "canon".

The biggest problem is that substantial changes were made (both in content and in story) to the Ages for the xPacks. If I knew for sure that all the changes in all the Ages that were made for To D'ni and TPotS were going to be changed back the way they were originally designed, it would be better for everyone to just sweep To D'ni and TPotS under the rug and wait for the Ages to be rereleased as they were originally intended.

The problem with that idea is that as far as "bang for the buck" goes, it makes little sense to put that much work into areas that some (if not most) of you have already seen. The amount of work we can do at the moment is extremely limited when compared with where we

were when Prologue was shut down. Even if it were still at Prologue's level, it would still probably be better to spend our resources on areas you haven't seen yet.

So, if the Ages aren't going to be changed back, there is less harm in considering To D'ni and TPots to be fairly accurate.

There are far too many unknowns at this point to be dogmatic about what will and will not be canon if/when Live returns. And if Live doesn't return, it makes even less sense to worry about what is/isn't canon.

Until Uru is a mess as far as "artistic license" is concerned. But it's all we've got at the moment to work with. And at least it's better than what we had from Feb 2004 - Feb 2006. Thanks for putting up with it in the meantime.

😄

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Mon May 01, 2006 2:49 pm   Post subject:

Julian Lapis wrote:

> *To D'ni and PotS were part of the content pipeline, right? My guess is that once the prologue was over and AbM 'started' properly, with regular updated content, they were going to be the first 'story arcs' to be included, namely the Great Zero and the Watcher's Sanctuary.*

Oh, I wanted to comment on this too, as it might help make things a little clearer...

Yes, the Ages that were in To D'ni and TPoTS were in the pipeline. Those particular story arcs weren't necessarily in the pipeline, though.

The "Great Zero" calibration was something that was planned. It changed a little to be something one person could do alone, and the motivation for calibrating it was completely different, but the general idea was the same. I hope that this is something that will be "reset" in Live to its original design.

The "Watcher's story" in TPotS, however, was retrofitted into Ages that had different purposes in their original designs. They would have told very different stories if Live had not been canceled.

Trivia

Those who were in the original beta know how much the Ages in "Uru Prime" were changed for Prime (journey cloths added that weren't intended to be there, puzzles that were added, etc.) The same kind of thing happened with TPotS, only we had even less time to retrofit that stuff in.

Hope that helps,

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Tue May 02, 2006 9:33 am   Post subject:

Zardoz wrote:

> *Besides, the great thing about a game universe built on discovery is that "canon" can be revisited by unearthing new facts. As Cyan figures things out, the DRC can always make new discoveries that cast a different light on old "truths".*

I agree with you completely on this, Zardoz, which is why I generally don't get into the "canon" debates. For example, despite appearances there is no real contradiction between what the D'ni could do with the Art and what Yeesha can do with it. Differences, yes. Contradictions, no. 😃

But there's a difference in the case of the xPacks, where the story was changed and might be changed back. In most cases, as I've said before, I don't think the story will be changed back, though the Ages might be. For example, in the xPacks Kadish wrote Ahnonay, and Ahnonay was changed so it could could be completed by a single player. Originally, Ahnonay was written by someone else, and it required at least two people to complete it. I can imagine that Ahnonay might be changed back to require more than one person, but I don't think the "Deceiver" will be changed back to the other writer.

But there could be things that I'm just not remembering at the moment where changing the Age won't make sense without changing the story back as well. In that case, we'll have to decide whether changing the Age is worth it. In the long standing Cyan tradition, we'll burn that bridge while we're crossing it.

😃

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

End of Ages

RAWA
Posted: Fri May 26, 2006 1:48 pm   Post subject:

Morningstar wrote:

> *I would be surprised if the Myst Island we see in*
> *EoA is the one that will be included in Uru Live. We*
> *have been told many times that the island was*
> *reduced in the Myst game with respect to the "real*
> *one" for technical reasons, while in EoA the island*
> *is much like the same as in the first game (apart*
> *from the obvious effects of time). As Live is*
> *supposed to be "real", then we should get the "real",*
> *full-sized Myst.*

This has come up before back in beta the first time
around. Zardoz can probably find my response to show
how I answered this last time. 😃

Here's my answer this time:

 "Artistic License" was an IC explanation for things
that had to be changed in the Myst games for financial,
technical, or game-play reasons. It worked very nicely,
because, IC, the games were recreations of historical
events.

Uru, doesn't have that luxury, as it isn't meant to be
a recreation of an historical event. Uru is supposed to
be happening now; you are supposed to be you; etc.
But... we still have to live within those same
financial, technical, and game-play limitations. So
just because you see something in Uru doesn't mean that
it's "real" (the way we want it to be), it just means
that we can't use "artistic license" as the explanation
for why it isn't the way we wish it were.

The most glaringly obvious example of this is kicking
those fish traps around. Anyone who thinks that's "real"
(either that's really what you would do if you were
there, or that that's the way we wanted it to be), well,
I don't know what to say, other than "Um, no." 😃

Suffice it to say, if Myst Island shows up in Uru at
some point, I would be very, very surprised if it
wasn't the same size as it was shown in Myst.

Such is life.

😃

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

In Cavern

RAWA
Posted: Mon Nov 06, 2006 12:41 pm   Post subject:

Thanks for this thread. Many great comments, and a few reminders for me.

Marten wrote:

> *Because "In-Cavern" is abbreviated as "IC", but "IC" means "In-Character", I think that contributes to this struggle. I'm sorry to anyone who feels otherwise, but I believe Cyan was wrong to re-purpose "IC" and "OOC" and try to give them special meanings for Uru. Stealing words out of the vernacular and giving them new definitions will always lead to confusion.*

The replacement was intentional. My rationale for it at the time was that I had played one other on-line role-playing game, and there was no tolerance for "Out of Character" at all in that game, to the extent that makes anything I've seen in Uru or the DRC forums seem very tame in comparison. And while I enjoyed being "In character" there, I didn't find the IC/OOC arguments there "fun" at all, so I wanted a more forgiving distinction between "IC" and "OOC" in Uru. So I intentionally defined "In character" for Uru to basically mean "treat the Cavern as if it were real". Other than that, you're free to be "you", leaving the definition of "you" intentionally vague enough to cover those who want just be themselves in Uru and those who want to create another character for themselves. Obviously, I'm strongly in the camp that would rather people play themselves as much as is possible in Uru, but I also understand that there are some who don't want to do that and would rather not exclude them.

Quote:

> *There is no way to ensure that everyone who joins in URU will read RAWA's definitions despite their prominent and sticky placement on this forum.*

I understand that they may not have seen it, but it is always there to refer them to if the need arises. Thanks for pointing them there. There are other ways that we can help make this clearer in Uru Live.

Quote:

> *My suggestion is to find new words or phrases to define the real and fictional aspects of participation in Uru. This change could be a first step to overcoming the stigma some players have with "IC". I'm not saying my idea is a solution. But I'm saying, "I think this could help some."*

The problem with changing it, is that it defeats the purpose of defining it in the first place. I want "IC" to have a different meaning in Uru than it has in other places, and changing the term to something else doesn't do anything to address that. Changing "In Character" to "In Cavern" is a gentle reinforcement that "IC" in Uru is intentionally a bit different than what "IC" might mean elsewhere.

My preference would be to educate people on what "IC" means in Uru, rather than coming up with a different term.

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Tue Nov 07, 2006 5:49 pm   Post subject:

Rusty_Russell wrote:

> *A liaison and a representative are completely different beasts.*

I left this alone while this was in other the forums, but now that this has been posted in the area where I'm free to roam, I'm not going to let this pass.

From thesaurus.reference.com:

> *Main Entry: go-between*

> *Part of Speech: noun*

> *Definition: middleman*

> *Synonyms: agent, arbitrator, attorney, broker, dealer, delegate, deputy, emissary, entrepreneur, envoy, factor, interagent, interceder, intercessor, intermediary, intermediate, intermediator, liaison,*

> *matchmaker, mediator, medium, messenger, negotiator, proxy, referee, representative*
>
> *Source: Roget's New Millennium© Thesaurus, First Edition (v 1.3.1)*

Given that "liaison" and "representative" can be considered synonymous, and given that Marie used <u>both</u> in her initial announcement:

"These representatives will <u>serve as liasons</u>[sic] between the explorers and the DRC.", it is clear that she was using the two terms interchangeably. This would have been fine, if not for the fear that the people selected were going to be granted some kind of governmental powers over the other explorers based on using the more specific definition of "representative" in a political sense.

With the unintended controversy over the term "representative", during her next visit to the cavern, she was asked to clarify if she had meant "liaisons". She clearly said:

"Yes. Liaisons."

The accusations made in another thread that the DRC changed what they were asking for are not based in fact.

The continued hypersensitivity to the term "representative" is also counterproductive, especially in this case where the current liaisons have no governmental power but do, in fact, represent the explorers in the broader sense of the word.

Hope that helps settle a few misconceptions.

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Wed Nov 08, 2006 10:29 am   Post subject:

Zardoz wrote:

> *Now for RAWA: The best way to view "liaison" is in its linguistic roots: from ligätus, past participle of ligäre, to bind. Liaisons have the capacity to bind explorers and the DRC, and are indeed representative of the role of explorer, in that they are drawn from that community. Still, liaison is such a better word than representative - those triple vowels are to die for!! - that I'd urge the DRC to use the former rather than the latter.*

I agree with you, Zardoz, and, as far as I can tell, so do the DRC. I haven't seen any of the DRC members use "representative" to refer to the liaisons since the debate between the two terms was started.

However, that doesn't mean that every time someone describes the liaisons as "representatives" that they need to be "corrected", because, well, technically, they're already correct.

😬

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Thu Jan 18, 2007 10:57 am   Post subject:

JWPlatt wrote:

> *This is a double post from an IC section, left here as flypaper should a certain RAWA care to eventually, and perhaps foolishly, respond to the current drama:*

What is this piece of paper? Oh, great. Flypaper. Now I'm stuck. Sheesh.

OK. Even though you got me here, I'm not going to respond to the current drama. But I will respond to the response to my previous responses. 😬

Quote:

> *I do not recall how the initial request came down, but Marie's "The Liaisons" post was clearly in response to what had already begun. My recollection is we chose the term 'liaison' AFTER the initial request for representatives. Transparency was the driving force behind the term we chose, and so we made the distinction even if Cyan did not. Marie's interchangeable use of the words, RAWA's post notwithstanding, were a result of our changing the name of the group the DRC requested.*
>
> *As to RAWA's quote of Marie saying "Yes. Liaisons." the quote would only be credible if she had used the word before any of us.*

From the transcript of Marie's initial request:

Quote:

> *(02/28 21:07:42) Marie Sutherland: So what I was saying is that we need a small group of representatives.*

Trivia

> *(02/28 21:08:44) Marie Sutherland: These*
> *representatives will serve as liasons between the*
> *explorers and the DRC.*

So, technically, you're accurate. Marie didn't use the
word "liaison" before the explorers, but she did use
"liason" about 62 seconds after she used the word
"representative". If only someone had handed her a
dictionary, I think it's safe to assume she would have
used the word "liaison" rather than "liason".

😄

<pause for comedic effect>

Can someone help me with this flypaper now?

Thanks.

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

Cyan

RAWA
Posted: Tue Feb 20, 2007 5:58 pm   Post subject:

Xanos wrote:

> *I've heard people claim Cyan only employees c. 30*
> *people a couple times now, but this interview has*
> *the real answer. :lol:*

The number of employees at Cyan was in the low 30s when
we re-opened our doors roughly 17 months ago. That was
the whole company, not just production, of course. Our
numbers grew by 9 a few months ago when we were "hired"
to provide the in-game Customer Service Reps (those
nice ResEngs answering your harassment calls, giving
the orientations in the Beginner's Neighborhood, etc.),
bringing us to our current number of 40-something
employees (but not adding anyone to production).

Whilyam wrote:

> *Still would be nice if they had that extra 20 people.*

Yes, we'd love to have at least 20 more people in
production, just to get production back to about the
number it was during Prologue, and so that those of us
who are now attempting to do what in an ideal world
would be two, three or, in some cases four separate,
full-time jobs could focus on just doing one or two of
them.

And while we're visiting the land of make-believe, we
might as well go for the planned ramp-up that was
supposed to happen after the 2004 launch, bringing
production up to roughly 75 people. 😃

But for now, in the real world, we'll have to continue
to do the best we can with what we've got.

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Wed Feb 21, 2007 5:20 pm   Post subject:

I asked a ResEng to split the comments about this
article out of the "Uru Live on a wire" thread and into

their own thread so we can discuss them without derailing what is mostly a nice, clean thread to point people to the various news articles.

Zardoz wrote:

> *Xanos wrote:*
>
> > *2/15/07:*
> >
> > *A long Mercury News interview with Rand Miller.*
> >
> > *Mercury News link*
>
> *Wow. I may be out in left field, but I found Rand's utter disconnect with what is really going on in the cavern to be deeply disturbing. By all accounts, the protest that he credits for getting the forums back was a disaster, in that it was an unpleasant experience for all concerned. Yet Rand blithely says, We were waiting for them to protest IC and they did. No recognition of the technical, OOC limits such as accessing the city and the horrendous lag. Pavlovian response was all they were looking for, and that's what they got.*

It has been pointed out, and I'm just confirming that Rand's comments here were not referring to the sit-in at all. In fact, as Engberg explained after the sit-in, the sit-in actually hurt his case with Cate. But that had nothing to do with technical or OOC problems.

Quote:

> *And then there is this:*
>
> > **Quote:**
> >
> > *The story happens while they are there. They affect how quickly things happen and what happens. That story then becomes the history of what it's so interesting but hard to describe. It becomes written history for people that come from six months from now. They will know the library opened on this day, and the day after, it was crazy. It becomes part of the ongoing mythology of that library.*
>
> *Again, no recognition that no one, mostly notably Cyan, has developed any systematic way of recording this "history" to which he refers, most importantly, in the cavern itself.*

Why, exactly, would you expect that level of detail in an article like this? This was an article about the launch of Uru, where Rand briefly touched on many

different aspects of Uru. If this were an article focusing on the details of how one of those facets works, I'd see your point. But to pick apart examples that Rand is giving because he doesn't give all the details you wanted him to give about those facets is unfair to Rand and unrealistic to expect from an article such as this.

Quote:

> *And so we're back to rats in a maze. There is no real story, only a series of appearances by actors that trigger new tasks for explorers to perform, in the hopes of getting material pushed a little faster. Well, I say . . . but it's there in my sig, so no need to repeat myself.*

And as I said last time:

Quote:

> *If you don't find it entertaining (understandable), then don't do it. 😃 Find something to do [in Uru] that you do enjoy. "Live", to some extent, will be what you make of it."*

That's all still completely true.

[I added the "[in Uru]" to clarify that I'm not saying "If you don't like it, go away", I'm saying if there's something in Uru you don't enjoy, then find something in Uru you do enjoy.]

and

Quote:

> *There is no "right." We'll give you whatever "cheese" we can either way. You're just collectively choosing whether you get "American" cheese, Velveeta, pepper jack, provolone, etc.*

Also still true.

What has changed from last year when we had this discussion is that now there are other things in Uru if you don't like cheese. And we're adding new things as often as we can. Feel free to go find the things you do like and ignore the things you don't.

JWPlatt wrote:

> *In all my diatribes on the forum issue, I was never IC about it. I was leveling my complaints directly at Cyan for confusing IC with OOC by using this out-of-game forum, and the things we value here, for their own purposes.*

Therein lies the problem. The DRC site and its forums (excluding this specific OOC forum) are IC. This has been stated repeatedly. We're not the ones confusing IC with OOC. In fact, based on the term you used, you seem to be confusing OOC with OOG. 😃

The forums were taken down for completely IC reasons (Cate has several reasons for not wanting the forums on the DRC site, you (that's a collective "you") even mentioned a few of them a few months ago, coincidentally just a few days after we had a very similar discussion here (and I was forced to check Cyan for listening devices again), and they were brought back for IC reasons (Engberg was trying to convince her that she had over-reacted, and that a compromise would be better for everyone). Some of you helped Engberg make his case. The sit-in, in the way it was handled, did the opposite.

Zardoz wrote:

> *While the DRC can be swayed by how explorers react, I don't get the impression that Cyan can be swayed by how customers react.*

Are you serious, or are you just stirring the RAWA hornets' nest with the Zardoz stick to see what happens?

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Thu Feb 22, 2007 3:37 pm   Post subject:

Marten wrote:

> ***RAWA wrote:***
>
> > *In fact, as Engberg explained after the sit-in, the sit-in actually hurt his case with Cate. But that had nothing to do with technical or OOC problems.*
>
> *The only alternate reading I can make of this is that Cyan was waiting for the explorers to protest not as a reason to open the forums....but as an opportunity to demonstrate that a protest can backfire.*

Sorry to disappoint, but we weren't trying to demonstrate anything. The sit-in could just as easily have helped Engberg's case, had the "sitters" made different choices.

Quote:

> *Yet the protest backfired primarily due to a technical limitation: the number of people allowed into the city, not an IC reason. And I hope nobody trots out the excuse of "The DRC has set a low limit on Ae'gura for safety reasons." That's just trying to paint an IC veneer on an OOC issue.*

That's why I was clear that the reason that sit-in hurt Engberg's case was not for technical or OOC reasons.

The sitters chose the place and the time and asked Cate to come. She came to the selected place at the selected time, ready to discuss why she was against the forums on the DRC site and to hear the reasons the sitters had for bringing them back.

So, far from backfiring, the "sit-in" itself was fine. Sitters were there. Cate was there. Others were there as well, but that was irrelevant to Cate. That all of the sitters couldn't get in because of an OOC technical reason was also irrelevant (by that I mean that the number of sitters was not the reason the sit-in hurt Engberg's case.)

Now, please keep in mind that I heard about the events of the sit-in second hand, so may not be completely accurate, but my understanding is that the sitters ended up leaving without even hearing the reasons Cate had for taking the forums down or discussing why they wanted them back.

That was their choice. And that choice, specifically, is what hurt Engberg's case the most.

Quote:

> *In this case, the protest was doomed to failure from the start; I don't see a way we could have ever succeeded.*

Maybe I just don't understand what would have been considered "successful". From where I'm sitting, the sit-in would have been "successful" if those who had made it to their selected place at their selected time had taken advantage of the opportunity that they were given to discuss the forum removal with Cate. That's what they asked for. That's what they were given. It didn't happen exactly they way they wanted it to happen, but that hardly means that the sit-in had to be considered a "failure".

Quote:

His point was this: Just as OOC things can have an impact within the IC world, the IC action of removing the DRC forums took away his access, OOCly, to the OOC forum here at drcsite (and also his private messages, which probably deserve to fall under the OOC category as well). And JWPlatt took objection to that. He's definitely not confusing IC and OOC here.

Ah, I understand now. A valid point, indeed. Yet another apology is in order. I seem to be having to make a lot of those lately. You (collective "you") are correct, and I'm sorry that we didn't think of bringing the OOC forums back separately from the IC forums. That would have made a lot more sense.

RAWA

CYAN – Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Thu Feb 22, 2007 6:16 pm   Post subject:

Zardoz wrote:

First, let me completely back off the direct critiques of Rand's quotes. Your response was completely on target, RAWA, and I withdraw my comments.

Many thanks. 😊

Quote:

What I see is cheese mania sweeping the cavern, which may decrease the performance of the game and, in my opinion, degrade the quality of the story-telling.

I understand and share the concern about the two most recent examples of players making an impact in the Cavern being "sit-in" kind of things. I would much rather the examples be on things like calibrating the Great Zero, but since that doesn't actually work at the moment, it's hard to use that as an example. More things along the "great zero calibration"-ish kinds of cheese are "on the list", but they won't be here in the immediate future. "Great Zero Calibration"-ish cheeses take much longer to age than "Ask Cate to show up at a certain place and time"-ish cheeses.

Quote:

RAWA wrote:

> *The forums were taken down for completely IC reasons.*

> *So what was the IC reason?*

I imagine that her biggest complaint was something along the lines of a sentiment that was expressed back in November by some fellow named "Zardoz":

Zardoz wrote:

> *So here's my suggestion: Close this site entirely to all posts except those of the DRC. Create a new website, The Explorers Club, that is entirely IC but separate from this site. After all, if this site really is IC, **what the heck is the DRC allowing outsiders to post anyways?!?!***

I have no problem whatsoever imagining Cate saying something very similar to the bold portion of that last sentence to the DRC members when stating that she wanted the DRC forums to go away.

(I quoted the rest of that paragraph because reading it brought an interesting thought to mind. I'll come back to that in a while.)

She had other reasons as well, some of which are being enforced by the new moderators.

Quote:

> *And why weren't the Liaison Election forums returned? If there's an IC reason for that, I'd love to hear it. [snip] I will wager my signature that the Liaisons Election forums were not returned for OOC reasons, pure and simple.*

Nope. The loss of the Liaison Election forum was one of the compromises that Engberg had to make to put the forums back on the DRC site (even hidden as they are currently). Cate is pretty adamant about those not being made available to the general public again. I'm reasonably sure she has what she considers very good reasons for that.

Which brings me to the interesting thought I mentioned above. It may have been better in the long run for Engberg to have lost the forum battle with Cate. Maybe then he would have looked for an alternate place to put them (e.g. The Explorer's Lodge) and could have set up the forums without a few of the compromises he ended up making with Cate. Now I don't say that with any certainty, but I don't see Engberg as one to not come up with other creative solutions if his attempt to put

the forums back on the drcsite had failed. I have, of course, been wrong before.

Quote:

Seriously, my grumpiness stems mainly from what I view as being on the losing side in a battle for the "ear" of Cyan, in terms of giving feedback on story elements.

You've had my ear for some time, if that matters. Not that I get everything I want. But then, neither does Rand, for that matter, so I guess I shouldn't complain.

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Fri Feb 23, 2007 12:59 pm   Post subject:

Dan'nee wrote:

(And if Rand didn't say Douglas Engberg, which I would bet he didn't, then that's a major problem as well.)

I do not doubt that Rand actually said "Douglas Engberg", and I know exactly why he would make a mistake like that, but I won't say more than that (it's one of those "are you sure you really want to know?" things). It's unfortunate, but just take it as evidence that Rand is, in fact, human, too.

Quote:

In this environment, we have a great opportunity, as the audience, to get involved and change the story, but we shouldn't have to jump-start it.

In the interview it seemed like, for example, if we weren't pushing for things that it would take longer for things to get released.

Yes, these are side-effects of the description being over-simplified, because Rand was just trying to give an example of the players being able to have a direct effect on things in Uru.

In this specific case, yes, we were waiting for someone to even tell Cate that they cared about the forums being gone. The first several times she went in, no one even asked her to bring them back. Once people started asking her about them, Michael went in (while he was looking at the Library) and said he would try to get them back up.

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Fri Feb 23, 2007 1:12 pm   Post subject:

JWPlatt wrote:

> *Honestly, even if I didn't explain it well here, my posts on the subject were so voluminous, intense, explicit about IC reaching into an OOC forum, and perhaps even better written over at MystOnline, I'm at a loss about how the message could not have been heard.*

The reason is fairly simple: I haven't read anything in the MystOnline forums in months unless someone here at Cyan specifically points me to a thread they think I need to respond to. Even thirty hour days wouldn't be long enough.

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Fri Feb 23, 2007 3:29 pm   Post subject:

Zardoz wrote:

> **RAWA wrote:**
>
> > **Cate is pretty adamant about those not being made available to the general public again.**
>
> *The bolded statement simply blows my mind, because the only way we know this is that RAWA, an OOC person, has told us!*

You're absolutely right. This is an OOC conversation, and since my previous explanation that the forums were removed for IC reasons still left room for doubt that the IC reason applied to the Liaison forums, I spelled it out more blatantly. A bad idea to have spelled it out? Maybe. I blame the penguins.

IC, feel free to infer from the fact that Engberg didn't put that forum up when he put the others up that there was a reason for it. The compromises he said he had to make with Cate seem to be the most likely explanation for that.

Quote:

> *This entire discussion has been fabulous, but it underscores the limitations of keeping a character like Cate purely in-cavern.*

I understand that, and in the parallel quantum reality where the Uru Live team got ramped up to 75 people, I would imagine that something like that probably has happened. In this quantum reality, giving access to Cate and the others outside the cavern is only going to further stretch people who are already about to snap.

Is it ideal to keep 99.9% of the interaction with the characters in the cavern? No.

Is it one of the limitations we have to work within at the moment? Yes.

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

RAWA
Posted: Fri Feb 23, 2007 4:22 pm   Post subject:

Ooops. This is another one I wanted to comment on and somehow missed it...

Marten wrote:

> *There's been a lot of discussion on whether obvious defects in the game should be treated IC or OOC.*

I, for one, am firmly in the "Bugs should not be treated IC" camp.

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

An Interview with lockergnome

NOTE: Alan Dennis from lockergnome.com had the opportunity to discuss the Myst series with Richard A. Watson, D'ni Historian for Cyan. RAWA here speaks more regarding the issue of "artistic license," as well as giving a few small tidbits of information.

Part 1

Recently I had the pleasure of interviewing a very well known man in the game industry, Richard A. Watson. Also known as RAWA, Richard works for Cyan Worlds, the makers of the Myst series. In this interview, we were able to discuss RAWA's background in the industry, the background of the Myst series and even the quantum physical basis for the games. This is the first chapter in a series from that interview, in which RAWA tells us a bit about himself and exactly what he does at Cyan. Be sure to check back on Game Invasion tomorrow, in order to catch the next installment!

Alan:
Hello Richard. First I'd like to thank you for taking the time to talk to us, we all understand how busy you must be. If you could, please take a moment to introduce yourself and share a bit about your gaming background and also what it is you do at Cyan Worlds.

RAWA:
My name is Richard Watson, though many in the Myst communities know me as "RAWA" or "Dr. Watson".

My gaming background mainly goes back to around 1980. I spent as much time and money as my parents would allow at the video arcades. When we got our first home computer (an Apple][+) in 1982, I spent even more time playing computer games. One of the first games we got for the computer was a text adventure from Infocom (Zork II). Infocom's text adventures instantly became my favorites. It was also at this point that I knew I wanted to make computer/video games and started teaching myself how to make simple games in my spare time.

In 1986, I saved up for a Nintendo Entertainment System. At the time, Super Mario Bros. was by far my favorite game at the local arcade, and the idea of being able to have the game at home was something that I just could not believe.

A few years later, while in college, I took a job at Nintendo of America (NOA) as a Game Play Counselor (the title given to those answering the hint phone lines). That was my "dream job", not just for getting paid to play and learn the latest video games, but also because I was taking computer programming in college. NOA had a policy of giving job openings to in-house employees first, so I imagined it was a way to get my foot in the door there, and that I could move up into game programming once I graduated. I ended up quitting that job after about a month, mainly because of scheduling conflicts.

It worked out in the end, though. If I had stayed at Nintendo, I'd never have met Rand!

I met Rand Miller (president of Cyan) in August 1992, and was hired in September 1992. I've worn many hats here at Cyan over the years.

When I was first hired, my main job was helping Rand assemble Myst in HyperCard, but I also did less glamorous things like entering the data from the registration cards that people sent in for our pre-Myst products, answering some of the mail (before we had email), maintaining Cyan-related HyperCard stacks such as the stack that kept track of our time cards, etc.

After Myst, I did all of the HyperCard assembly and programming for a remake of one of our earlier products (The Manhole Masterpiece Edition).

For Riven, I was on the original design team, took on the roles of D'ni Linguist and D'ni Historian, and did nearly all of the HyperCard assembly and programming. I also began answering Cyan's email and helped with the technical support.

Since Riven, I've mainly worked on the design team, kept my duties as the D'ni Linguist and D'ni Historian and answering most of the email sent to Cyan, with the occasional odd job thrown in when needed.

Alan:
It's really a testament to the depth and detail within the Myst series that there actually is a D'ni Linguist and Historian. What kind of duties are involved in those positions?

RAWA:
My main duty as the D'ni Linguist is to provide the
D'ni translations for the games and the novels. They
are mostly there to add to the sense of detail and
realism that we put into our environments, but
occasionally they're also used in the puzzles in the
games. In Riven, for example, the player needed to
learn the basics of the D'ni numbering system to solve
a few of the puzzles.

My main duty as the D'ni Historian is to keep track of
what we know about D'ni history and to help research to
find out more about D'ni history. Since we are
designing the Myst games based on D'ni history, one of
my duties is to throw up a red flag if something in the
game and something in D'ni history are in conflict.
Sometimes, usually for gameplay or technological
reasons, my flags are over-ruled, but we do attempt to
keep the conflicts to a minimum.

Part II

Here we bring you the second installment in a series of
interviews with Cyan game designer, Richard A Watson -
aka RAWA. In this chapter, RAWA discusses the
background of the Myst series and that sometimes, due
to design decisions, the games were not always able to
follow the exact history of the D'ni culture that RAWA
works to preserve.

If you're just starting to read this series of
interviews, be sure to check out the first chapter, in
which RAWA describes both his game design background
and also the work that he does for Cyan.

Alan:
Since part of your job is to make sure that the games
follow closely with D'ni history, does that mean, in
essence, that the games and the background of the D'ni
are designed as separate entities?

RAWA:
Yes. The games and novels are based on what we know
about D'ni history, but they are separate from it. One
of the nice things about D'ni history is that it
doesn't have to live within time or budget constraints
or worry about gameplay issues or technological
limitations.

The games, unfortunately, do have to live within those
kinds of limitations. This has made it necessary to
deviate from what we know about D'ni history from time

to time. Most of our fans understand the need for the differences and really appreciate that we do our best to keep those deviations from D'ni history to a minimum. Some, though are less forgiving, which to some extent is understandable.

The ironic thing is that as the D'ni Historian I'm very likely to be the person who is the most frustrated by the changes that have to be made, and yet, since I also answer the majority of Cyan's email and participate in various fan communities, I'm also the one that often ends up having to defend (or at the very least explain) those changes. In fact, one of the earliest Myst fan communities (the Riven Lyst) set up virtual therapy donation jars for me shortly after Riven was released because I was complaining about changes that were made in Riven.

Alan:
Was the history first designed for the novels and then used as a guideline for the games, or the other way around, or was it synchronous?

RAWA:
Hmm... well, many parts of D'ni history were known before the first Myst game was made, but that wasn't for the sake of the novels. The novels were written several years later (during the development of Riven).

Alan:
What are a few good examples of how the games ended up diverging from known D'ni history? If possible, could you give examples for each game?

RAWA:
There are many examples I could give. I'll just pick two from each game.

Myst:
Myst Island as seen in the games is smaller than the island described in Catherine's journals, and only the structures necessary for the game were modeled. For example: Atrus would have been in the habit of creating "Places of Protection" for all the Ages he wrote, yet the island in the game only contains the four that are required for the game - the gear, the rocket, the tree and the boat. (A fifth "place of protection" was included in realMYST, an updated version of Myst made in realtime 3D.) Also, the places where Atrus and Catherine lived were not necessary for game play and were not included. The biggest things left out were the Ages that Sirrus and Achenar were trapped in, which were not shown at all in Myst. If you get trapped in

their Ages (two of the losing scenarios), all you see is black. We did this for several reasons. The Ages weren't necessary except for the losing endings (so cutting them saved time and money). We also didn't want to "reward" the players with a new area to see/explore in the losing endings. However, sounds of their two prison Ages are added in realMYST, and their prison Ages can be fully explored in Myst IV.

Riven:
As with Myst, the size of the islands were scaled down dramatically so they could be modeled and rendered in the time we had for the project. The Rebel Age was reduced to just one room and a small cave that could be explored (though more of it could be seen at a distance).

Another fairly substantial change was made that may not seem like a big change at first glance. According to the historical accounts, when Atrus' friend arrived in Gehn's office with the prison Book, Gehn did not confiscate it (which he does in the game). Rather, he just continued to keep Atrus' friend under constant surveillance so he would know if Atrus' friend ever used the Book. It was a small change, but the effects were larger than one might think. If the player were clever, he could have used the Book to release Catherine without ever opening her prison by trapping her in the Book. It also would have given the player the option to capture Catherine if he was convinced that she had gone bad. Story-wise, this would have been more interesting, as it would have allowed for many different endings. Unfortunately, that's precisely why we had to change it. There were too many different combinations of endings that all would have been required to have been filmed with the actors, which just wasn't feasible within the budget and time constraints we had for Riven.

Uru:
There are two main continuity related complaints that people have.

The most common is the location of the Cleft. The novels do not say where the Cleft is located, but give several hints that it is in the Middle East. Uru pretty blatantly says that the Cleft is in the southwestern United States. People ask why we moved it New Mexico in Uru. The fact is that the Cleft has always been in New Mexico, and the red flags I raised when the hints about the Middle East were put in the novels were over-ruled. At the time, we never intended to reveal the true

location of the Cleft, so the misdirection to the Cleft's location being in the Middle East was considered acceptable, I guess. Frankly, I was very happy that the locale was finally set straight in Uru.

The second issue is that Yeesha seems to be able to do things that were previously described as "impossible" in the other games and novels. She does have abilities that no D'ni writer is known to have had, but mostly she just breaks rules that the D'ni had made for the Writing of the Books. Her abilities are entirely consistent with the quantum mechanical basis for the Art as we have understood it since before Myst was made.

Part III

Saving the best for last, here comes the conclusion to our interview with Cyan game designer, Richard A Watson - aka RAWA. In this final chapter, RAWA exposes some of the lesser-known aspects of the Myst universe and discusses the quantum mechanical aspects of these games.

So, without further delay, here's the fascinating conclusion to this interview with legendary game designer, RAWA.

Alan:
Previously you mentioned the quantum mechanical basis of the Art, which, as I understand it, is the D'ni practice of writing "linking books." These books create a means of travel to the worlds described within them. The Art is really at the core of each game and it is, in my opinion, the most fascinating aspect of D'ni culture. Could you possibly give a brief explanation of the quantum mechanics that make the Art work?

RAWA:
Wow, that's quite a challenge! I'll give it a shot.

First, if you haven't been exposed to the weirdness of quantum mechanics, what I'm about to say may be difficult to believe. Take heart. Even though quantum mechanics is one of the most successful theories in history and is responsible for things we use every day like the laser in your CD player or the microprocessor in your computer, no one really understands exactly how it works. One of the "fathers" of quantum mechanics, Niels Bohr, is often quoted as having said "Anyone who is not shocked by quantum theory has not understood it."

One of the interpretations of quantum theory is that until a state of matter is observed it exists in many states simultaneously - it exists as a "probability wave" that contains all of the possible states of that matter. Therefore, as was proposed in Schrödinger's famous cat analogy, bizarre things happen on the quantum level that would allow things like Schrödinger's cat to be both alive and dead at the same time, until one of the states is observed, thus locking it in the single state that was observed. When this observation occurs, all the other probabilities cease to exist, as the "wave" collapses.

[Trying to summarize 100 years of quantum theory in a paragraph or two can't really do it justice. There are dozens of great books written to help explain the implications of quantum theory to the lay person. My favorites include: "In Search of Schrödinger's Cat" by John Gribbon, "Quantum Theory" by Nick Herbert, "Parallel Universes" by Fred Alan Wolf, "Schrödinger's Kittens" by John Gribbon, and "The Dancing of the Wu Li Masters" by Gary Zukav. There is also an excellent, though very brief, overview at http://www.faqs.org/docs/qp/.]

What the D'ni seemed to have concluded (proved?) though, is that those probability waves don't cease to exist altogether, instead each possibility continues to exist in an alternate quantum reality (read "parallel universe"), until a state is observed in that quantum reality, and the possibilities not observed in that quantum reality continue to exist in still another quantum reality, and so on ad infinitum. This means that every possible combination of quantum events since the creation of the universe exists in a quantum reality somewhere. The D'ni called this "The Great Tree of Possibilities".

The Art of Writing allows observation of (thus locking of) and travel to those quantum realities.

Alan:
Earlier you also mentioned Yeesha, who is the daughter of Atrus and Catherine, the main characters from the Myst series. Yeesha is apparently able to break the rules of the Art but without breaking the laws of quantum physics. Since this is the case, why do you think the rules of the Art were created the way they were?

An Interview with lockergnome

RAWA:
Most of the D'ni rules were likely started for a good reason: to help ensure that Ages that were written were safe for people to travel to. It's probably obvious that you'd want to be sure that any Ages written would have oxygen to breathe, tolerable air pressure and gravity, etc. A trade-off of limiting creativity for safety.

We do the same thing in many areas. Take engineering, for example. We have many laws that restrict how buildings can be made. It isn't that it is impossible to make buildings outside of those laws, it's just that we've decided it is better to limit creativity for safety.

Alan:
So it is possible that the Art was fundamentally limited? Or is Yeesha simply the one special, perhaps enlightened, individual who is capable of exceeding those rules?

RAWA:
Both, actually. I've already mentioned the self-imposed limitations that the D'ni made for safety reasons. Since Atrus and Catherine were mostly self-taught in the Art of Writing and learning by trial and error, they didn't know all of the rules that the D'ni had made over the millennia.

Atrus had an innate ability for writing Ages. He broke some of those D'ni rules in his writings, but his Ages were well thought out and were, for the most part, safe.

Catherine had an entirely different style of writing. She wrote from her dreams. Her Ages defied logic at times, but they were still possibilities that existed out there in the "Great Tree of Possibilities". Her style also allowed her to write things that the D'ni would have considered impossible – such as the giant daggers that suddenly appeared in Riven. There was an infinitesimal chance of them appearing, and she could "beat the odds" so to speak to make that happen.

Yeesha is the combination of the best of both of her parents, and is even better at "beating the odds" than her parents were, making her by far the most powerful Writer in all of D'ni history as a result.

The "Great Tree of Possibilities" was a great strength in the Art of Writing. Since there are so many possibilities, any description that could be written existed somewhere in the Tree. However, this was also

one of the Art's greatest weaknesses. Regardless of how detailed a Writer's Age description was, there were countless Ages on the Tree that matched it - and there's a chaotic element (random, beyond the Writer's control) as to which of the matching Ages a written Book will link to.

For the most part, this limitation didn't cause many problems. After all, if two Ages are similar enough that you can't tell the difference between them, it usually wouldn't matter which one was selected. But there are times when the ability to Write a link to a specific "instance" of an Age could be extremely useful.

And that's where Yeesha's "power" comes in. Yeesha is the only known Writer in all of D'ni history that seems to have an innate talent to control which of the matching Ages will be selected. An example of how powerful this talent can be was shown in Uru and in the second expansion for Uru (The Path of the Shell), where she demonstrates the ability to link to two specific and distinct versions of what appears to be the same Age.

Alan:
There's no doubt that the D'ni culture is one of the most detailed and fascinating backgrounds in any game. Every chapter of the Myst saga brings with it more and more intrigue surrounding both the D'ni and the Art. Is there anything you can share with us about the upcoming Myst V and what fans may be able to look forward to?

RAWA:
We're not giving much away about the story in Myst V yet. I can tell you that Myst V will continue the tradition of answering many questions that the fans have had about the D'ni and the Art. (Of course, those answers will likely raise more questions...

Alan:
I want to thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to talk with us. I'm going to be eagerly waiting for the upcoming Myst V! Until then, thank you for all the great work you've done on the series!

RAWA:
You're very welcome.

The Stranger: A Conversation with Robyn

robynmiller
Posted: Fri Oct 07, 2011 11:52 pm — Post subject: **Who Really is The Stranger**

Hi everyone! I just had a conversation with one of your members, who directed me to this most excellent forum. I had a bit of a snag joining, but I'm here now. Cool!

I'm totally glad to find this place because...

1) ... it's kick ass and the fans are kick ass, and I think you're amazing! (and thank you endlessly for loving Myst!).

2) ... it's the perfect place to address this "Stranger" business.

3) ... did I mention how great the fans are? And yes, now I'm just trying to make you love me.

I think most of you probably correctly understand the player's role in Myst. But then again, it was never overtly spelled out, and so over the past few years it's not surprising that this "stranger" explanation ever raised its ugly head, because it's a concrete answer to an ambiguity. So in case there is still any confusion...

I actually don't know where the idea of "the stranger" first popped up, but there is no stranger. The player is simply the player. And if some other "truth" has been imposed upon the Myst universe, that's a creative weirdness that took place without the knowledge of the original designers and kinda sucks, because it steals the mystery away from the thing. There is a good ambiguity when the player personally enters this world and lives within this world. But the idea that the player is playing the part of a character is not good; it pulls us away from our experience and so the place becomes less believable (and we so want to believe it).

It's like when The Force changed from a spiritual force to a biological thing. I know it sounds silly, but there was a time when any of us could conceivably practice and _maybe_ attain The Force! Now The Force is

a biological truth and we have to be born with it. It's stolen from us! (thanks a lot George)

Each player, individually, wanders through the Myst world. You create your own experience. You don't play the part of another character; you are you. You fall through the fissure, you are alone on an island with the sons of Atrus. You don't live vicariously through some other being (with his or her own personality and his or her own intelligence); it's you, attaining and exploring, living and breathing; that's what we worked so hard to achieve. And so this confusion about a stranger undermines so much of that.

Hmph! So there!

-- Robyn Miller

robynmiller
Posted: Sat Oct 08, 2011 11:50 pm — Post subject:

Quote:

> *You know you've screwed up a perfectly good canon when even one of the original designers thinks it's too confusing. I'd be interested to know what you think about the whole Bahro story and Yeesha magic and weird linking rules like having the same book take you to different instances of an Age depending on who you are.*

There's some great discussion going on here! Thanks for everyone's input... it's really helping me understand stuff I never even knew about.

The original Myst is classic. A lot of things made that happen and I'm not sure how much I, or Rand, had to do with it. It had a life of its own and, at some point, it become something much larger than either Rand or I... or Cyan. I think when that happens to a creation, it's time to stay away. No more tinkering. No more redefining what that thing is. In a way, when a thing reaches this stage, in a way it no longer belongs to the creators, it belongs to history, and going back and changing the original work (or redefining the original work) is like trying to re-write history.

That said, I'm sure the above change was put into effect for some logical reason that had to do with the multiplayer Uru world. Is that right? A multiplayer environment probably created all sorts of logical issues, because Myst was never designed with that in mind. We never intended anyone to visit D'ni. We always

knew that Riven was the end of the canon, and then we'd turn our creative eye(s) elsewhere.

-- robyn

RAWA
Posted: Sun Oct 09, 2011 8:02 pm — Post subject:

(Hi, Robyn, nice to "see" you!)

I do have a slightly different recollection of events, regarding treating Myst and Riven as "just games". 😬

First, though, for those who may not know, back in the Myst days, Cyan was very small (growing to six people over the course of the project, I was the fifth), and most worked out of their own homes. I started at Cyan in Sept. 1992. Myst was roughly half completed at that time. Rand and I worked at Rand's house in "the back room" - a small addition on the back of his house. We literally sat five feet apart until we all moved into Chris Brandkamp's garage during Riven production a few years later. We had all day for me to throw every question possible at him from linking theory and quantum mechanics to Atrus' backstory. And he had a "lot of 'splaining to do" (Ricky Ricardo voice). I wanted to know everything, and Rand couldn't get very far away.

It was already solidified in Rand's mind. None of his answers were "What if..." or "I don't know, maybe..." kinds of things, as if we were hammering out new things as we went along. So I assumed until now that Robyn and Rand were on the same page with all this from the beginning. Looking back, and knowing how different Rand and Robyn are personality-wise, that assumption was short-sighted. Given this revelation that this was news to Robyn, I recognize that Rand and I were isolated in our own bubble for all of these discussions. Sure, there were weekly meetings where everyone got together in Chris' garage for an hour or two, but those were about the immediate Myst production needs of the moment, not for discussions about quantum physics. 😬

At any rate, while the exact details may have been "discovered" bit by bit over years of time, the foundations for treating the backstory of Myst and Riven as more than "just games", (the quantum nature of linking, the basic history of the D'ni, etc,) were all there when I started at Cyan in 1992, not as afterthoughts coming many, many years later, at least as far as Rand and I were concerned.

As evidence, I submit:

1) My first responses (via snail mail, we didn't even have email back then) to people asking questions about the Myst backstory always treated the events of Myst as historical. (1993-1994)

2) In the first FAQ on our first website, I explained that the brothers weren't merely trapped in voids without food and water as it appeared in Myst; and that Atrus hadn't killed them by burning their books; he just destroyed the links to their Ages, etc. (1994-1995)

3) The novels describe themselves as having been based on Catherine's journals. (1995-1997)

4) The words "To D'ni" written in D'ni were inconspicuously placed in the environment behind Rand and Robyn during television interviews during Riven production (1995-1997); this eventually led to the "To D'ni" website ARG (though it wasn't called an ARG back then), the final solution of which had the "winner" actually call in and have a brief conversation with a D'ni surface dweller (Guildmaster Yahtair). The winner would later receive a beta copy of Riven. (To D'ni was "won" in March 1997)

5) The Riven Soundtrack booklet had a picture of a page, written in D'ni, discovered "at a recent dig". I don't have the booklet with me as I write this, but if I recall correctly, that was the first time I was referred to as "Dr. Watson". (1997)

Of course, all during this period of Riven development Robyn and Richard Vander Wende were locked in Cyan's basement hammering out Riven's design details, so he definitely has a legitimate excuse for not knowing the specifics of what we were doing upstairs. 😊

The beauty of it all, IMO, is that there is no single right answer that has to fit for every person.

For those who just care about Myst and Riven as stand-alone, immersive experiences, you can do that. They were designed specifically to provide that first-person experience with as little as technologically possible to distract from it, like few other games have ever attempted, let alone achieved. ("You are you." "Act and react as if you were actually there." "the adventure that will become your world" "You've just stumbled on a most intriguing book." and all that.) In that light, as far as the games themselves are concerned, they are

"just games". YOU found the Book, what are YOU going to do now? Lose yourself and enjoy, please! 😃

If, however, you want to dig deeper into the story behind those games, the novels are there.

If you want to dig even deeper, To D'ni, PreAfter, and Uru were/are there.

If you want to dig deeper still... study the history of New Mexico, brush up on your quantum mechanics, and grab a shovel. 😃

You are free to pick the one you enjoy the most. Or none of the above, for that matter. 😃 I think it's really cool that Myst/Riven/D'ni can provide that range of experiences for those who want them (or not for those who don't. 😃.) Selecting the option that is right for you doesn't have to detract from anyone else who selects a different option. Variety, the spice of life, and so on.

In any event, Robyn, Rand, and I all completely agree that having questions (mysteries) is always more interesting than having "all the answers". May you always have mysteries to ponder.

😃

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

robynmiller
Posted: Mon Oct 10, 2011 5:08 am — Post subject:

Quote:

> *The only thing I remember RAWA stating is that there is more to the "real" Myst island than what was shown in the game. I seem to recall that at one point he stated that Myst is actually larger with more places of protection than what was shown. However (again if I remember right), he later clarified (or changed) his stance to say that the "real" island is not necessarily larger than what was shown in the game, but there are still hidden things that we did not see (like bedrooms).*

Hi! I want to say again that it's great hearing from everyone! Before I answer any more questions, I should say this... the correct concept and philosophy of Myst (or Riven, or Uru) is probably whatever concept allows you to have the most fun playing it. Myst is yours...

the fans. And the most I can do is tell you what we, the designers, originally intended for the Myst experience.

That said, regarding Myst island and additional hidden areas, like bedrooms... if you want to imagine those areas are there, it's fine. We never designed or intended anything like that. We wanted to give you freedom to explore everything on Myst island.

-- robyn

robynmiller
Posted: Mon Oct 10, 2011 5:21 am — Post subject:

Quote:

> *Of course, all during this period of Riven development Robyn and Richard Vander Wende were locked in Cyan's basement hammering out Riven's design details, so he definitely has a legitimate excuse for not knowing the specifics of what we were doing upstairs.*

Hi Rich!

I have no real idea what you're getting at but I almost feel like I should say I'm sorry? Sorry!

-- robyn

robynmiller
Posted: Mon Oct 10, 2011 5:31 am — Post subject:

Quote:

> *How much were you involved in the writing of "The Book of Atrus"? You're certainly credited as contributing to it.*

A lot and not much at all. Rand, Richard and I sat around and hashed out the story in a broad way, but we weren't really getting anywhere. We had a rough outline... very rough. At one point, Richard Vander Wende and I took a few days away from Riven (we were well into production) and, working on it full time, we hammered out a much more detailed outline.

Then we handed it over to David Wingrove, who wrote it in less than a month. A herculean feat.

I had no time to work on the sequels... Riven production was at its peak.

The Stranger: A Conversation with Robyn

-- robyn

RAWA
Posted: Mon Oct 10, 2011 7:08 pm — Post subject:

robynmiller wrote:

> *I have no real idea what you're getting at but I
> almost feel like I should say I'm sorry? Sorry!*

It's all good, Robyn!

Just trying to provide context for why you and I might
give completely different answers to the same questions.
😄

Carry on! I've learned some new things in this thread,
too!

😄

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

robynmiller
Posted: Mon Oct 10, 2011 11:02 pm — Post subject:

Hi everyone once again... thanks for your continued
posts. It's so much here! I had no idea!

I respect Rich (RAWA) enormously but it bothers me that
there's continued misinformation out there about
something.

And so RAWA, some of this is directly for you...

When I first Star Wars Episode I, I was disappointed
(for a number of reasons). But I was probably most
disappointed at the new description of The Force. In
the original three films, The Force was a spiritual
force… something that bound the entire universe
together… something flowing through all of us. That was
pure magic. But in the prequel, in his attempts to be
enforce logic--almost a dogmatic logic--on the Star
Wars universe, George Lucas made The Force biological.
He changed the rules.

I'm using this as an analogy... the player of Myst was
never meant to play a role of a separate character (the
stranger), and the Myst experience was never a
simulation of a historic experience as interpreted from
someone's journals (Catherine). Like Lucas' change of
mind about The Force, all this was a change, for the
sake of logic. But at the cost of magic.

According to Rich, this retrofitting was necessary, because new back-story required the change. But over time, this new ancillary "truth" (created for the sake of back-story) replaced the original concepts we created for Myst. They replaced the original concepts of "you are you" and "the stranger" has become the new truth.

So Rich... I just think all of this is a bummer and that's what I'm saying. Because with this change of "the stranger", Myst becomes a more passive experience. Myst becomes a historic recreation rather than live events that are happening to you, right now. That's not a world. That's more like a book. We might as well have written a book. Someone above said this very well. They said Tolkien did the same thing when he wrote Lord of the Rings (a reinterpretation of a journal). But Tolkien wrote books, and books are passive experiences. With Myst, and Riven, we worked very hard to create an active experience that take place in the present, while you play... with you personally living it. You're there. You are in the world. I would never have created Myst if I thought it would become a passive simulation of a historic character. I might as well have written a movie.

With all this said, I think it's important to restate that each player must interpret the Myst experience in their own way. If they like the concept of the stranger, they should play it with that in mind! But if they don't like it, then it might be comforting to know that it was never there, and was stuck onto things long after the fact (I'm sure with the best of intentions).

Quote:

> *We had all day for me to throw every question possible at him from linking theory and quantum mechanics to Atrus' backstory.*

The Atrus' backstory was still in its infancy during the creation of Myst; this may be what Rich is talking about. D'ni (spelled Dunny back then) existed as a rough concept) but Atrus' actual story wouldn't be drawn out in great detail until our work on The Book of Atrus, which was outlined and written during the middle of Riven. That's when came up with Atrus' childhood, the cleft, Anna, Catherine, and the events that took place between Gehn and Atrus.

Quote:

> *It was already solidified in Rand's mind. None of his answers were "What if..." or "I don't know,*

maybe..." kinds of things, as if we were hammering out new things as we went along.

During the creation of Myst, Rand and I continually asked questions about everything you could think of. It was a constant process to solidify the un-solidified by saying, "what if..." and "I don't know, maybe...". We shaped and molded and pressed. Slowly. That's the creative process... We weren't sure of ourselves at all, though you imply Rand was. Rand was open minded to any new idea and he asked and listened without prejudice. I hope I did as well. (And did I mention we had a blast designing Myst.)

Quote:

> *1) My first responses (via snail mail, we didn't even have email back then) to people asking questions about the Myst backstory always treated the events of Myst as historical. (1993-1994)*

The above point illustrates what I'm trying to get at. You may have told people, in your letters, that the events of the Myst game were historical, but you said this with little aesthetic sensitivity to the original intent and design of Myst. Maybe you weren't aware of our original intent. I don't know... maybe you just began to over-think the logic behind Myst.

Once again, to the fans of the Myst world... I adore you! Thank you for everything! You have no idea how much you've inspired me... I know that sounds weird but it's so true. So endless thanks!

-- robyn

TheDStranger
Posted: Tue Oct 11, 2011 7:56 am — Post subject:

I'll try to answer Robyn's questions, if I may.

The truth is, all these things are happening, because Myst is a world. It's much bigger than you might have originally planned or want right now, but it was growing. Maybe growing as we speak. This is something which I believe RAWA saw from the very beginning. But it's not RAWA's "fault" - it just happened. D'ni was no longer "Dunny", it was no longer this small prison in which Atrus is trapped. The books came out, new info about the D'ni. And Uru, of course.

And when Myst became a world, people were looking for logic. The Book of Atrus happened somewhen in the past, so Myst must have happened somewhen after! Being a game

doesn't mean the events are out of the loop of time, surely!

Games are the same as books, really. Especially a game like Myst. So Myst took its place in time and history, so the person who saved Atrus and Catherine (as well as the one who ran after Saavedro to J'nanin, and saved Yeesha) COULDN'T be you. Because you didn't live in 1805. So the player, originally supposed to be you, became "The Stranger", an historical figure.

And when a world starts to grow this way, "you" come back to the story. Who are you exactly? What is your relation to all those awesome stories? Are you taking the role of "The Stranger", experiencing his events sometime during 1805?

Uru answered us. It told us, that you are you. Yourself. The character you play in Uru is you – the same one who played Myst, or read Book of Ti'ana. And so, Uru became the "reality", and as you may know, it is going on realtime. Maybe it's not the perfect reality (after all behind all these talkings it's still a game being produced), but it is considered the "reality of the D'ni world". As opposed to Myst, which (unlike you originally wanted), is bound to the year of 1805.

Then again, it doesn't take out any of the Mystery. First of all, the things I said above only apply if you decide to go deeper, into the story, into Uru. While playing the games, you might (and maybe should) act as if you found the Myst book, you saved Atrus, you saved Catherine. This is the purpose of a game after all, as both you and I have said before. But the world of Myst grew since 1994, and if the player wishes to open up, he will discover Uru. He will discover that the events of Myst happened "somewhen". He will discover that he himself can go to D'ni! What differs Uru from the Myst games, IMO, is that it is easier to relate to the world there. Your adventure in Uru are not to defeat a dragon and save the princess (or defeat a crazy D'ni guy and save his son's wife, if you will), but to explore. Simply explore. There is the whole "save the bahro" thing which I don't quite like, but most of the game is about exploration. Things any of us can do. This is why it is taken more easily as a reality, at least for me.

Also, who said that not knowing who you are or when the things happen takes the fun out? We know about the Places of Protection in Myst as much as we knew back in 1994. What happened to the tree dwellers in Channelwood? Or to the dwellers in Mechanical? What is there beyond the canyon of Tay? What is there to see

beyond the locked door in age 233? If we go to the other "Stranger" games - what happened to Saavedro after we released him? Is Tamra alive? How does the village of Serenia looks? How exactly is the life stone connected to the dream chamber? If any of the games lack mystery, it does not have much to do with the fact that the events are historical. This is not something you are even supposed to care about when playing the games.

RAWA
Posted: Tue Oct 11, 2011 5:06 pm — Post subject:

Robyn,

I have been slow to respond, as I want to be deliberate. I don't think we're really all that far apart on this. So let me clarify what may have not been clear in my previous post.

1) "you are you" in Myst and Riven - I completely agree, and said in my previous post by providing several quotes, that Myst and Riven were specifically designed and are intended to be experienced as if YOU (the player) were the one who found the Book. I'm not disagreeing with you on that point at all.

However, as folks here have attested, once you've played Myst and Riven, if you want to dig deeper into the back-story (read the novels, for example) the games are (by nature of what the novels reveal) going to be seen in a different light. That cannot be helped, which is why I have always recommended people play Myst and Riven first, whenever I'm asked in what order Myst/Riven/the novels/etc. should be experienced.

2) My misrepresenting your initial intent - As I said, I only had those discussions with Rand to go on while forming my understanding of Myst when I started at Cyan. I have freely admitted that I was not aware that your views were different from what I learned from him at that time (late 1992, early 1993). I did not know until now that I had been misrepresenting your intent.

3) Rand's "solidified" mind - When I said things were "solidified" in Rand's mind, I was talking about the key foundations of the backstory when I first asked about them, which I clarified in the next paragraph "...while the exact details may have been 'discovered' [fleshed out] bit by bit over years of time, the foundations...(quantum linking theory,

basic D'ni history, etc.) were all there when I started at Cyan in 1992". I was not trying to imply that all the details were already there or that Rand wasn't open minded in the creative process while all those specific details were being fleshed out over the next several years (the novels, Riven, etc). I'm sorry if it came across that way.

My point was that I've been part of the development process with Rand many, many times over the last nineteen years: Riven, the novels, DIRT, Uru (and all it's permutations), Myst V, Myst Online (the land of perpetual development), Bug Chucker, and half a dozen others that never made it out of development into production. So I know very well Rand's creative process and the "what ifs..." and the "I don't know, maybes...", the give and take, the back and forth, the two steps forward three steps back (yes, there are days when it feels like you're losing progress), etc. and my conversations with him during the second half of Myst's production were not at all like that. That's specifically what makes them stand out, as I look back at them now.

4) Over-thinking and insensitivity - I'm very sorry that you feel that I was over-thinking the logic behind Myst and changing things without sensitivity to your original intent. I don't deny that I was over-thinking it - like I said, I hammered Rand with every question I could think of for about a year of Myst production.

But my first answers to fans via snail-mail, that first FAQ, etc. were all based on those talks with Rand, so as far as I knew at the time, I was following your original intent. Further, when a brand new question came in from the fans, I almost always ran any new answers by Rand to be sure I was on the same page with him. I did not just release "new" information unilaterally on a whim. That continues to this day, in fact, if I have doubts of Rand's position on an issue. I even emailed my first response in _this_ thread to Rand before I posted it so that he had a chance to read it first, since I wanted to be sure I wasn't misrepresenting the content of the discussions we had during Myst production. ...I mean, it was nineteen years ago. There was the possibility at this point that I just dreamed all those discussions. 😅

To sum up: I'm sorry for my part in bumming you out about all this. If I could go back and change it so that everybody wins, I would. I'm not exactly sure how,

but I'd try somehow. Further evidence I never get access to a time machine.

😃

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

robynmiller
Posted: Wed Oct 12, 2011 8:13 pm — Post subject:

Free Bird wrote:

> *You see, I've said this before, probably also on public forums (although I can't be bothered to look up any quotes), but to me you're the true genius behind Myst. That's not to say Rand is not a genius (of course he is) or that the others weren't important, but you are the genius. It's like the Jagger/Richards song writing partnership. Keith Richards is a genius, but Mick Jagger is the genius. I mean, the guy wrote Brown Sugar and the lyrics to Street Fighting Man. Need I say more?*

1) Mick Jagger would have been nothing without Keith Richards and Keith Richards would have been nothing without Mick. Arg. So there!

2) There was no genius behind Myst. Nothing could be further from the truth. Rand and I came up with the concepts for Myst together. We both had slightly different strengths, but the concepts in Myst were an absolute collaboration. We came up with the ideas together. Most importantly, Myst and Riven were team efforts that involved a large amount of incredibly talented people. For products like these, there is no such thing as genius. There was only a philosophy... that we will not compromise on design or implementation of design... because people will be spending hard earned money on this thing... so we have to work our asses off and give them the best we can reasonably give them. Not perfection but something good. Teams of people, at many levels, made this happen.

Free Bird wrote:

> *What are your thoughts about the changes in the way books (prison books in particular) work, between Myst and Riven? In Myst, the books (some books at least) act like videophones. In Riven, they just display an animation of what the Age looks like. You can't see Gehn inside his prison book after you've*

trapped him, whereas you could see Sirrus and Achenar in Myst. Several explanations have been given in the past, but I'd like to hear it directly from you.

When you were designing Myst, was it set in the "present day" (i.e. late twentieth century) or in the early nineteenth century? Did this ever change during your time at Cyan? Myst obviously needs to be set in the present if you are you, but the idea that it actually happened centuries ago surfaced pretty early on.

What's up with Atrus' letter on the Myst box? I mean the "My only hope is that I can find the answer before it's too la...." one.

About your first question... regarding videophone prisons. When we made Myst, we definitely thought of the prisons books as prisons and not ages. So there was a certain magic with an idea like that... and it was kind of dark. I personally always imagined, especially when I was editing the little movies, that Atrus and Sirrus were trapped in some distant timeless void. Waiting but not waiting. What kind of father would do that to his sons?

In Riven, Gehn didn't live in this kind of prison... he lived on an actual age (I forget it's number). And then later in Riven, when you trap him, ideally you would have seen him in the trap book. Honestly, I don't know why you don't see him... I don't remember. There were inconsistencies that found their way into Riven because we had to make our release date. Maybe it was just one of those things we originally never shot... wanted to go and back and re-shoot, but it was too late at that point.

As to your next point, Myst wasn't set in any time period. The idea was this: Atrus falls through the fissure, the book continues falling and, somehow, someway, you end up with it. Maybe you find it sitting on your kitchen table one morning, as if you alone are "called" on this adventure. Maybe it's lying on the curb of a dark alley. Really, how you find it is left to your imagination. You open the book and... it all begins. But the Myst world itself is somewhere else, sometime else. And the events written about in the Book of Atrus, specifically D'ni, were never intended to be here on earth. They took place on another Age.

"My only hope is that I can find the answer before it's too la...." This was an absurd artistic license taken by a marketing guy at Broderbund. Overall, Broderbund

was a key player in the success of Myst. Their founder, Doug Carlston, saw Myst island in its infancy and instantly understood that it was something different.

-- robyn

robynmiller
Posted: Wed Oct 12, 2011 11:53 pm — Post subject:

RAWA wrote:

> *To sum up: I'm sorry for my part in bumming you out about all this. If I could go back and change it so that everybody wins, I would. I'm not exactly sure how, but I'd try somehow. Further evidence I never get access to a time machine.*

Rich, you didn't bum me out! Sorry to infer that! Alert: all Myst fans know this... not only is Rich is killer amazing, and also dedicated to Myst. He is also a little elfish looking. Once or twice I really suspected elfish blood. Maybe I still do... (admit it Rich).

So all in all I'm talking about the general direction of the Myst canon. And of course none of this is some great political issue, no one is losing a job or going to war over this, so there's really no reason for any of us to be very upset or anything. But I always thought of Myst and Riven as art, not product. It's okay to go back and change the formula for Pepsi or Cascade detergent, but even the creators don't really have the right to change and redefine an original work. At least I don't think they do. Because it's already entered the public's consciousness.

So that's what it's really about... changing the original work into something it was never meant to be. And will it be changed even more? Even an elf can see that we don't want any more changes to that work.

-- robyn

mszv
Posted: Thu Oct 13, 2011 5:32 am — Post subject:

robynmiller wrote:

> *So all in all I'm talking about the general direction of the Myst canon. And of course none of this is some great political issue, no one is losing a job or going to war over this, so there's really no reason for any of us to be very upset or anything.*

But I always thought of Myst and Riven as art, not product. It's okay to go back and change the formula for Pepsi or Cascade detergent, but even the creators don't really have the right to change and redefine an original work. At least I don't think they do. Because it's already entered the public's consciousness.

So that's what it's really about... changing the original work into something it was never meant to be. And will it be changed even more? Even an elf can see that we don't want any more changes to that work.

I remember discussions about this, in the beta, other places. Once you release a work, a piece of visual art, a painting, a video game, the work stands on its own. You don't get to take it back. You don't get to say "I didn't really mean that". Just because there were inconsistencies, in let's say, Star Trek, you don't get to rewrite an episode. You can ignore certain inconsistencies if you choose, but you don't get to say "I didn't mean that". And if you try to do that, people get really mad -- examples abound in TV shows where people try to explain something that they want to change by saying "it was all a dream", and that's not well received.

So, let's look at Myst. Just because it played as first person, it could have been someone else, not you. Let's see, were you ever referred to by name or gender? Did you see your reflection in a mirror? Was there even one reference that referred to someone else? No, not one bit. So, it's you, the player, that's who is involved in the story. Notice what I did here. I did not reference someone's notes, a whiteboard, a document, what someone said on a website. Yes that can provide some context, but when you want to do canon, context, you look at the work, the creation, the piece.

So, the canon is what's in all the games, and (I suppose) the books, the published works. I don't think any of the video games outrank the others. What a terrible interpretation to say that Myst is a "game", but Uru is real. You can do that, but it doesn't seem borne out by looking at the object, the work, the creation. Is there something about Myst that makes you think it's a game, as opposed to Uru?

Personally, I feel a lot better about the whole thing, knowing that at least one of the creators of the works valued them as works, as creations, put out there,

released to the public. And when that happens, you can
never go back.

RAWA
Posted: Thu Oct 13, 2011 12:08 pm — Post subject:

mszv,

I understand your point. I do. I don't agree with it
entirely, but I understand it. 😃

Here's my biggest problem, using Myst as an example.

By the logic of only what happens in Myst (the original
CD-ROM game) is "canon":

1) The sun really never moved in any of the Ages,
   because it doesn't move in the original Myst. You
   can sit there on Myst Island and stare at the sun
   all day and all night (our time) for weeks on end
   and it will never budge an inch.

2) The clouds really never moved in any of the Ages,
   because they don't move in Myst.

3) There are only two butterflies on Myst Island and
   they keep precisely following the exact same few
   paths every time you see them. (Brand new retcon:
   Atrus spent all those years with nothing better to
   do than training his two pet butterflies (Moritmer
   and Willow) to follow those precise paths. (Relax...
   I'm kidding) 😃

4) The waves in the ocean defy all physics and just
   remain absolutely motionless, despite the fact that
   I can hear the waves lapping on the shore.

5) Atrus and Catherine must have never eaten (except
   maybe the occasional bit of moldy cheese when they
   visit Sirrus in Channelwood) or sleep, or go to the
   bathroom, etc., because we don't see any food, beds,
   or bathrooms on Myst Island.

6) You can hear wind just about everywhere, but the
   trees stay perfectly still, even the nice, light,
   deciduous leaves in Selenitic don't move _at all_ in
   the breeze.

and on and on and on and on...

So, one has to either be content with a world that is
completely inconsistent with itself (we're not just
talking "a bit of retcon here and there" inconsistent,
we're talking "fundamental inconsistencies between your
own senses" inconsistent: I hear wind, but I see that

the trees and clouds don't move. I hear water lapping, but I see that the water doesn't move, etc.); or you have to draw a line somewhere and say, "Hey, there are budgetary, time, technological, etc. limitations that limit what could be accomplished in creating Myst" (and would be just as true if it were made today, see: Uru.) You draw that line, even if it's only subconsciously, and (hopefully) suspend your disbelief: the Myst we (Cyan) are capable of representing on the screen will always be less complete than the Myst in your imagination.

But once you've drawn that line, you have to realize that the person next to you has drawn that line in a different place to satisfy their own personal "suspension of disbelief". They're bothered by certain things that you aren't bothered by, and you're bothered by things that they aren't bothered by.

One person is satisfied by filling in all those blanks on their own, with their own imagination. Someone else fills in those blanks while they're playing, but then is curious how we (the authors) would fill in those blanks, so they ask us.

Why? Because Myst isn't "just" a game to them. It certainly isn't "just" a game to me. That "ideal" Myst is a place I would love to visit. I want to know all about it. I'm not alone in that.

I will continue to maintain that there isn't a single "right" perspective that has to work for everyone. Each person is free to enjoy their Myst experience however they want.

If you want to fill in all of those blanks yourself, and you don't care how anyone else would fill them in - more power to you. You have my blessing. Go forth into the world and be happy. Please. Really!

And the person who writes to us and asks how we would have filled them in (well, if they wrote to me, they got an answer of how Rand would have filled them in, with my belated apologies to Robyn) is equally within their rights to do so, because that's what made _them_ happy in their Myst experience.

What has raised the hair on the back of my neck every time you've stated this position over the years, is that doesn't seem to even acknowledge that anyone else is allowed to ask us those questions. You're telling us what we (generically as authors) have the right to do and don't have the right to do. Quote: "You don't get to say 'I didn't mean that.'"

The Stranger: A Conversation with Robyn

RAWA to fan: "Sorry, but since the sun doesn't move in the game, it really didn't move. My hands are completely tied, because we shipped the CD-ROM that way." That's just plain silly. 😃

And so, whether I have your permission or not, I'm still going to say that the sun really did move on Myst Island if someone asks me, even though we couldn't render real-time shadows at the time. There really was wind, even though we couldn't animate all the trees and the water. And so on. 😃

And once you've opened that door, then linking questions are also fair game, because that bothers some people just as much as something you've filled in with your imagination to suspend disbelief. And guess what? Rand and I spent months talking about this very thing before Myst was released, precisely because it bothered _me_ enough to ask Rand about it while we were working on it.

[Here's where I admit that you can't go by me, because I'm the guy who always listens to all the actors/director's commentaries on a DVD and watches all the deleted scenes, alternate endings, etc. when available, because I want to know all the stories about what didn't make it into the movie as much as what did and how and why.]

So when people write in and ask those same questions, I give them the answer Rand gave me when I asked. Is it in the game? No. Do those people care about the answer, even though it wasn't in the game? Well, it would seem that they cared enough about it to take the time to write to us and ask us.

The reason that we had an FAQ, as the name implies, is that there were questions that we were asked frequently. There were plenty of people out there that wanted to know what was on the white board, so to speak, even if it wasn't in the game.

There are millions of people who played, each with their own point of view, and they all get enjoyment from different facets of their Myst experience. It's a shame to limit anyone's enjoyment by telling them that there's only one view that's acceptable, and it isn't theirs, which is what you're doing by saying that only what's shown in Myst itself "counts".

I've never told you (generic "you", now) that you are required to accept any of my answers in order to play Myst. There is nothing in Uru's EULA that states that you have to agree with "RAWA's take on Linking Theory"

in order to play. In fact, I've said the opposite many, many times over the years - "do what makes _you_ the happiest". And I've meant that sincerely every time I've said it. "If you don't want to drop the pellets, don't drop the pellets." "If you don't care about linking theory, you might want to move on to the next email" "If quantum mechanics makes your head hurt... join the club!", "If you don't like the withered carrot we have now, come back when we have fresh carrots!", "If you don't enjoy [insert topic here], then find something else you do enjoy. Please.", etc.

Really, I'm a "live and let live" kind of guy. Whatever floats your boat. Share and enjoy. Live long and prosper. But I extend that courtesy to those who don't hold your perspective, too.

I guess I don't understand why others can't be allowed to ask those questions, and why we shouldn't be allowed to answer them. And as long as my answers to those questions haven't changed over time (and they haven't, other than I may add a disclaimer for Robyn now), I don't have a problem with telling them how we (Rand and I) would have filled them in.

😃

with love to Zardoz's pony.

RAWA

CYAN - Richard A. Watson

robynmiller
Posted: Thu Oct 13, 2011 11:33 am — Post subject:

mr_jimmy wrote:

> *What have you been up to lately? Any new projects?*
> *What brought you to this forum? Being a key figure*
> *to the games that kept me sane through college I*
> *just wanted to thank you. Also, are you thinking of*
> *a come back tour with Cyan?*

Hi Jimmy... Great questions. Currently I'm working on a documentary called "The Immortal Augustus Gladstone". We're following a guy around who really believes he's immortal. He lives in his own little world and it's hard to tell what's truth and what's fiction.

Funny enough, it was recently pointed out to me, like Myst, he lives in a "deserted, decaying, surreal place"... a vacant hotel. And he has his own library!

Maybe that's why I was subconsciously interested in him!

Kuhlade, one of your members, told me about your forum.

And no, I won't be doing a tour with Cyan. 😃

Thanks for the great questions!

-- robyn

robynmiller
Posted: Thu Oct 13, 2011 12:25 pm — Post subject: **Re: Age 37**

Free Bird wrote:

> *I can't help asking you another question... What did you think of the Rime Age that was added in RealMyst? Personally I really liked it, even though it felt a bit tacked on (which it was). One of the few problems I had with Myst was that there was no real reward for completing it, and Rime fixed that. I also thought it was really clever how they later revisited the concept in Myst IV.*

I shouldn't comment on RealMyst specifically, but any remake should reexamine all elements of the original (story, visuals, sound, "mood", staging, gameplay, music, etc...) and then improve on all of these areas. If this can't be accomplished, the remake is an insult to the audience and it shouldn't be made.

-- robyn

robynmiller
Posted: Thu Oct 13, 2011 12:41 pm — Post subject: **20 Year Anniversary Myst**

ThedStranger wrote:

> *Now what I REALLY wanna see, is the real realMyst, so we can say that playing that is not an adaption, but "the real" experience. Something so awesome that will blow our minds. I guess I have to keep waiting.*

You'll be waiting for a very long time. If you really want something like this... an extremely real, awe-inspiring Myst, recreated from the ground up, maybe you should start a petition from the fans. Tell Cyan you don't want just another re-release of Myst. Or even a junky hi-res version of Myst (rendered from original low-res assets, or something like that). You want a

Myst made from scratch, that blows you away. All new sound, all new visuals, all new acting, all new everything. It's been 20 years and you, the fans, deserve it. Petition Cyan... the fans really have the power... and if there's enough of you, it might even help them garner the funding for such a project!

-- robyn

robynmiller
Posted: Thu Oct 13, 2011 12:46 pm — Post subject:

Trekluver wrote:

> *So I thought of something to ask Robyn about. What was the reasoning behind changing the linking sound in Riven? Was it to add to the darker atmosphere? Was it because you didn't like it? I have wondered this for a long time, since it's the same in all of the other Cyan made games, and figured you are the only person who can answer the question.*

I created the Myst linking sound quickly. So when we got to Riven, I thought I could improve on it a bit, while still keeping the general sensibility. It was an artistic license.

-- robyn

robynmiller
Posted: Thu Oct 13, 2011 8:56 pm — Post subject:

Main_Avvie wrote:

> *unless way back in 92 Rand and Rich were hammering out 20 years worth of D'ni canon from their secret lair...*

Hah! And it was underground too! And Rand wore a cape and Rich drove him around in the black atomic D'ni car!

Of course, we never expected Myst to be the success it was and never planned for anything past Myst, though we did create backstory.

here's how it went...

1) Rand and I spend years making children's worlds.

2) Rand and I think we can evolve past this and create a world that communicates story, and is aimed at an older audience.

3) We propose such a project to Activision, they reject it.

4) Disheartened, Rand and I make more children's stuff.

5) A Japanese company comes to us, out of the blue, and asks to fund a world aimed at an older audience.

6) We pee our pants with joy.

7) Rand and I begin designing the story, gameplay, interface, back-story and the philosophy of the Myst world. We do this all day, every day for about two months, non-stop. Drawing after drawing. I still have the notebooks of outlines and sketches. During these sessions, we came up with the idea of books as a way to transport oneself to other worlds (you should have seen some of our other ideas!)... I don't remember when we started calling the writing of books "the Art"; I'd have to look at my notes. Conveniently enough, we are able to use some of the good ideas of a mediocre novel I had been working on: namely, the concept of the underground kingdom of D'ni, or "Dunny" as we had then called it back then.

😎 Also, as Myst is created, Rand and I begin describing some rough ideas for why Myst Island exists. Why is Atrus there with his sons? Who is Atrus? We begin to rough out a larger story but, at this point, our own answers are blurry, like a sketch that doesn't know what shape it'll take, but it knows it has to take a shape. Ryan (our other brother) had a part in this as well.

8) So time passes, Myst is released and, much to our surprise, it's a massive success.

9) Rand and I and, at this point, now feel we need to answer some of our own very large unanswered questions. That's when The Book of Atrus came along. And then Riven.

-- robyn

Chogon
Posted: Fri Oct 14, 2011 10:22 am — Post subject:

I know to outsiders this looks like the comments of Robyn, RAWA and I to be a feud and "bad relations" between former and current Cyantists. But it is really just the push and push back that happens in a creative environment - and it might not always look like it, but it is always with the utmost respect for each other (and let me tell you, I've witnessed and have been a part of some really heated discussions at Cyan but in

the end, everyone was still very good friends - well, except for those two "never-to-be-named-again" people).

--Chogon

robynmiller
Posted: Fri Oct 14, 2011 12:11 pm — Post subject:

Chogon wrote:

well, except for those two "never-to-be-named-again" people)

You mean Voltomort and Darth Vader?!

They were always such complete asses.

Mark, I totally see what you're getting at... and yeah, just so everybody knows... I respect Mark, and RAWA, enormously. They were part of a great group of people that I totally loved working with. There was a lot of passion that went into Riven, at every level, and went into Uru as well, which you can see by the passion in Mark's previous post. I think that's amazingly cool.

-- robyn

robynmiller
Posted: Mon Oct 24, 2011 2:37 pm — Post subject:
Questions?

Mowog wrote:

I think we scared Robyn away.

I'm a little busy.

If anyone has questions about Myst, Riven, the early days of Cyan, game/story design, or what I'm doing now, don't hesitate to ask!

That's the stuff I know about. I really don't know much about anything post-Riven so I may not be able to answer questions about that, other than my opinions about those products and their relation to Myst and Riven.

-- robyn

robynmiller
Posted: Mon Oct 24, 2011 4:19 pm — Post subject: **Re: Questions?**

Lyrositor wrote:

> ***robynmiller wrote:***
>
> > *I really don't know much about anything post-Riven so I may not be able to answer questions about that, other than my opinions about those products and their relation to Myst and Riven.*
>
> *Have you played all the other games in the series (counting Uru; by the way, do you have a MO:ULa account, if you don't mind sharing of course?).*

Great question! I played a little bit of all the games except number four. Just to see what they were. I got more of a chance to wander around Uru. My son, Alex, and I even got a chance to beta test Uru a bit of it during its development!

-- robyn

robynmiller
Posted: Tue Oct 25, 2011 10:54 pm — Post subject: **Three questions.**

Free Bird wrote:

> *I have another question for Robyn, but it contains spoilers for those who haven't finished Riven yet.*
>
> *Ignoring all of Riven's endings that don't involve opening the Star Fissure, Riven can end in four ways:*
>
> *1. The good ending: Gehn is trapped, Catherine is saved, Atrus is happy, I go home.*
>
> *2. The bittersweet ending: Gehn is trapped, Catherine is not saved, Atrus is sad, I go home.*
>
> *3. The bad ending: Gehn is not trapped, Catherine is not saved, Atrus is killed, I am killed.*
>
> *4. The weird ending: Gehn is not trapped, Catherine is not saved, Atrus is not present, I go home.*
>
> *The weird ending can only occur if you guess the code or save the game before going to Tay, getting the code there and loading the game again. I've always wondered what the idea behind this ending was. Nothing really happens other than the act of opening the Star Fissure and falling into it. Was this ending not worked out to save time? Was it done to punish the player for cheating? The only reason I can think of why the bad ending couldn't have been used is because Cho is still lying there beneath*

that cliff, darted and all. I can see why Gehn doesn't show up, but not why Atrus doesn't. An explanation like "He didn't expect me to be done so soon" seems a bit contrived, because for all Atrus knows Catherine may have defeated Gehn (with help from the rebels) and be standing right at the link-in spot to welcome him.

I'm also curious about the format Myst's music is stored in. I'd be willing to pay good money if Cyan were willing to release the original files, provided they're in a format I can play back. And of course someone would still have to have them somewhere. And then there's the intro to Myst. It ends with the Myst book landing at the bottom of the Star Fissure, where I, the player, somehow stumble upon it and use it. At least, that's one possible interpretation. Is it also the intended interpretation or should I not take the intro so literally? I mean, these credits appearing next to the falling book are kind of weird too.

About that Myst book...

Hi... thanks for the great questions!

1) The only way to achieve the ending you mentioned is by a weird cheat. I can't see that we would have ever gone to much work trying to create an amazing ending, or even a completely logical ending, for something that was a cheat. You cheater! 😃

2) You mentioned the Myst music as original files... what kind of files do you mean? The music is for sale on CD-R via Amazon... it's pretty decent quality. You can also still find the original Myst CD, also on Amazon.

3) In the Myst intro, the book doesn't exactly land at the bottom of the star fissure... there is no bottom. During Myst and Riven, we always thought of the star fissure as a sort of rip between ages (or universes) caused by Gehn's complete misinterpretation of the Art. The book of Myst falls through this rip. Atrus has no idea to whom or to where it will go: it's understandably "unsettling" to him. Because it could end up on any age. But it ends up on Earth, where you (the player) happen upon it. I always imagine you (the player) come across it in some startling way. But that's left purposefully undefined.

As to the credits... an artistic license.

-- robyn

The Stranger: A Conversation with Robyn

robynmiller
Posted: Wed Oct 26, 2011 3:52 am — Post subject: Re:
Three questions.

Free Bird wrote:

> *Well, in the Making of Myst you can not only be seen playing your synthesizer, but also editing the compositions on your Mac. So I figured the music would be stored in some other format than just PCM, not necessarily MIDI, but something like it...*

Unfortunately, I've long since lost any MIDI files or anything like them.

Free Bird wrote:

> *About that Myst book... I know RAWA has answered this question before, but I'm interested in hearing your take. It's the only Myst book in the entire game that lands at (or slightly above) the dock, with all other Myst books leading to the library. What's the reason behind this?*

Some things are (or were) done for the sake of convenience. When linking back to Myst island with a red or blue page, it's just easier to link directly to the library. We took artistic liberties to do that... the linking books should probably all link to the dock, but we never imagined there would be "forums" discussing the various inconsistencies of the game we were creating! 😊 And really, our priority was to make it as playable as possible.

Free Bird wrote:

> *Finally, some answers lead to new questions. You mentioned that D'ni wasn't originally intended to be on Earth. Now, I started wondering, why do Atrus and the others speak English if they're not from Earth?*

I should point out that it have never occurred to us to not make the game in something other than English and we began the production of Myst with no logic behind the decision. It just had to be English.

During Myst and during the design of Riven, we knew Earth was an Age; that was a given. At a certain point, and I don't have a clear idea when, we decided that it was the D'ni who wrote and then colonized Earth (though there could have been a population on Earth already) bringing English along with them.

I thought this was something that Rand, Richard (Vander Wende) and I designed, but I guess it's possible that

Richard V.W. created this as backstory for our own design and story work.

-- robyn

robynmiller
Posted: Fri Oct 28, 2011 11:55 pm — Post subject: **Re: Actresses playing Catherine in Riven**

Free Bird wrote:

> *I've been trying to find out if this question was ever answered officially. I can't imagine it not being, but I can't find the answer either! So if it was answered before - sorry about that...*
>
> *Why was Catherine played by Sheila Goold but voiced by Rengin Altay in Riven?*

Wow... great question! Richard Vander Wende directed the acting in Riven and, as far as I can remember, overdubbing the voice of Catherine may have had something to do with characterization of the original performance. I don't remember all the details... Richard V.W. or Rand would have a more clear account.

-- robyn

References

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http://dnidesk.rivenwolf.net/rawaindex.html

DRC site forums: http://forums.drcsite.org/

Lockergnome.com interview:
http://www.dpwr.net/forums/index.php?showtopic=5326

MOULa site forums: http://mystonline.com/forums/