

The Computer as an Artistic Medium

Playgramming
September 24, 2012
Brian Schrank

Four Key Affordances of the Computer 'Medium'

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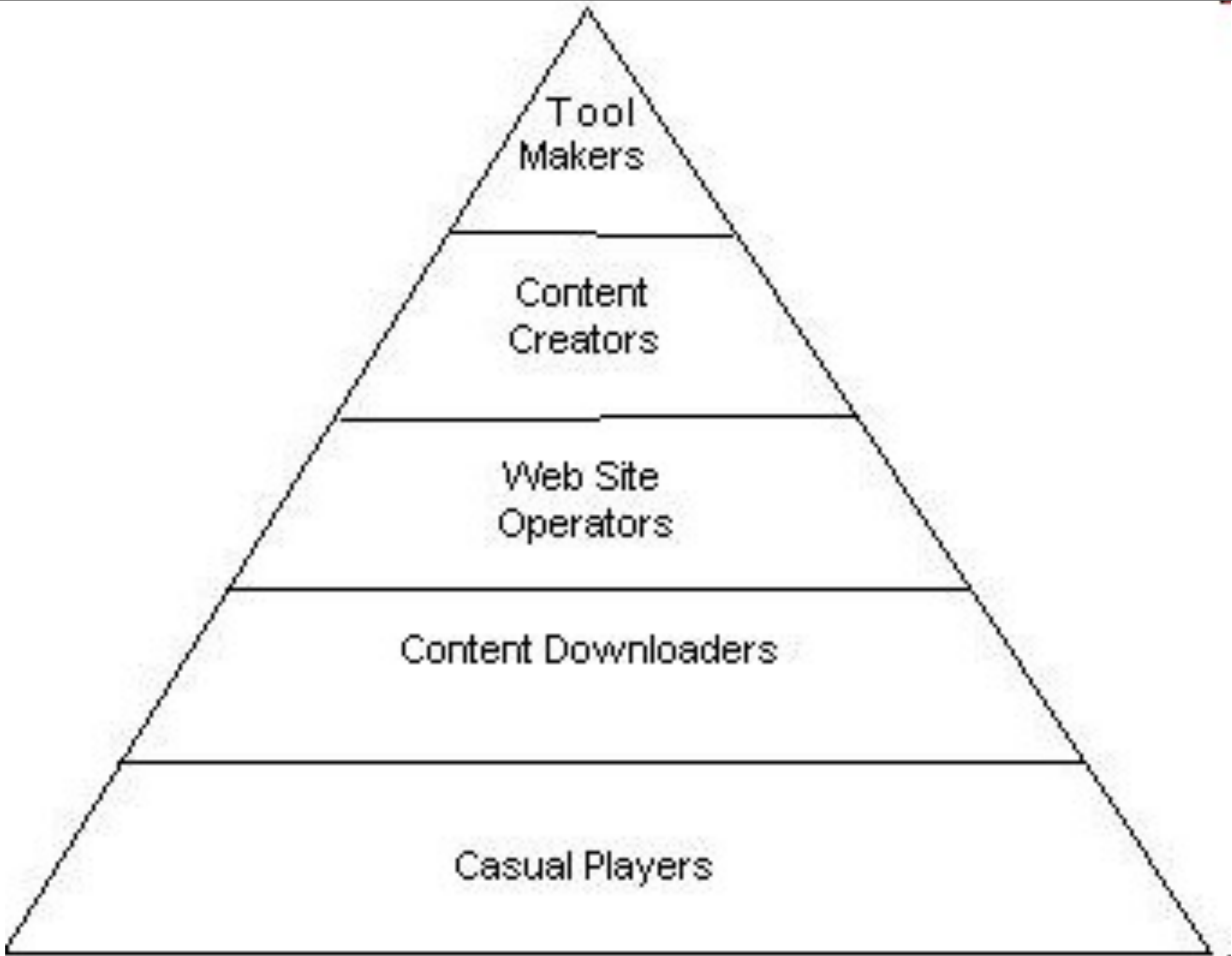
- These separately and collectively make the computer a powerful artistic medium:
- **procedural**
- **participatory**
- **spatial**
- **encyclopedic**

Procedurality

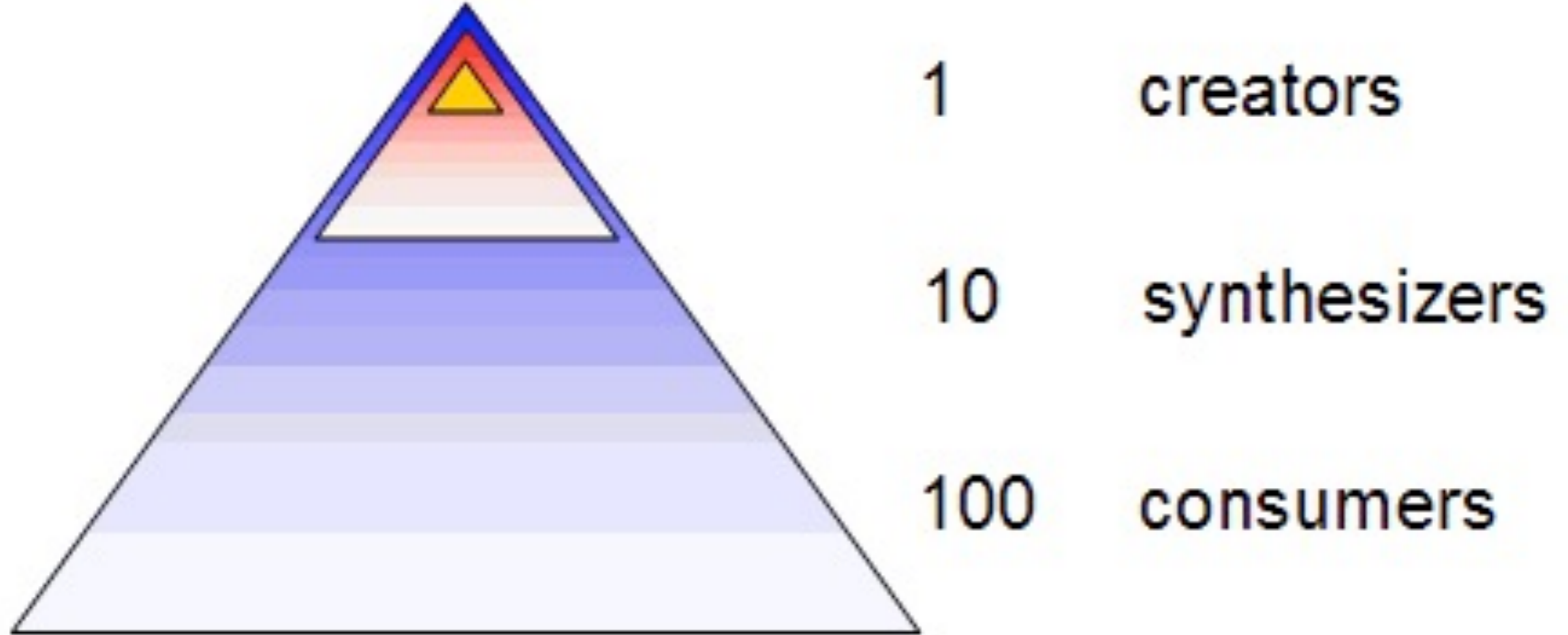
- The defining ability of the computer is to execute a series of rules.
- Embody complex contingent behaviors

Participatory

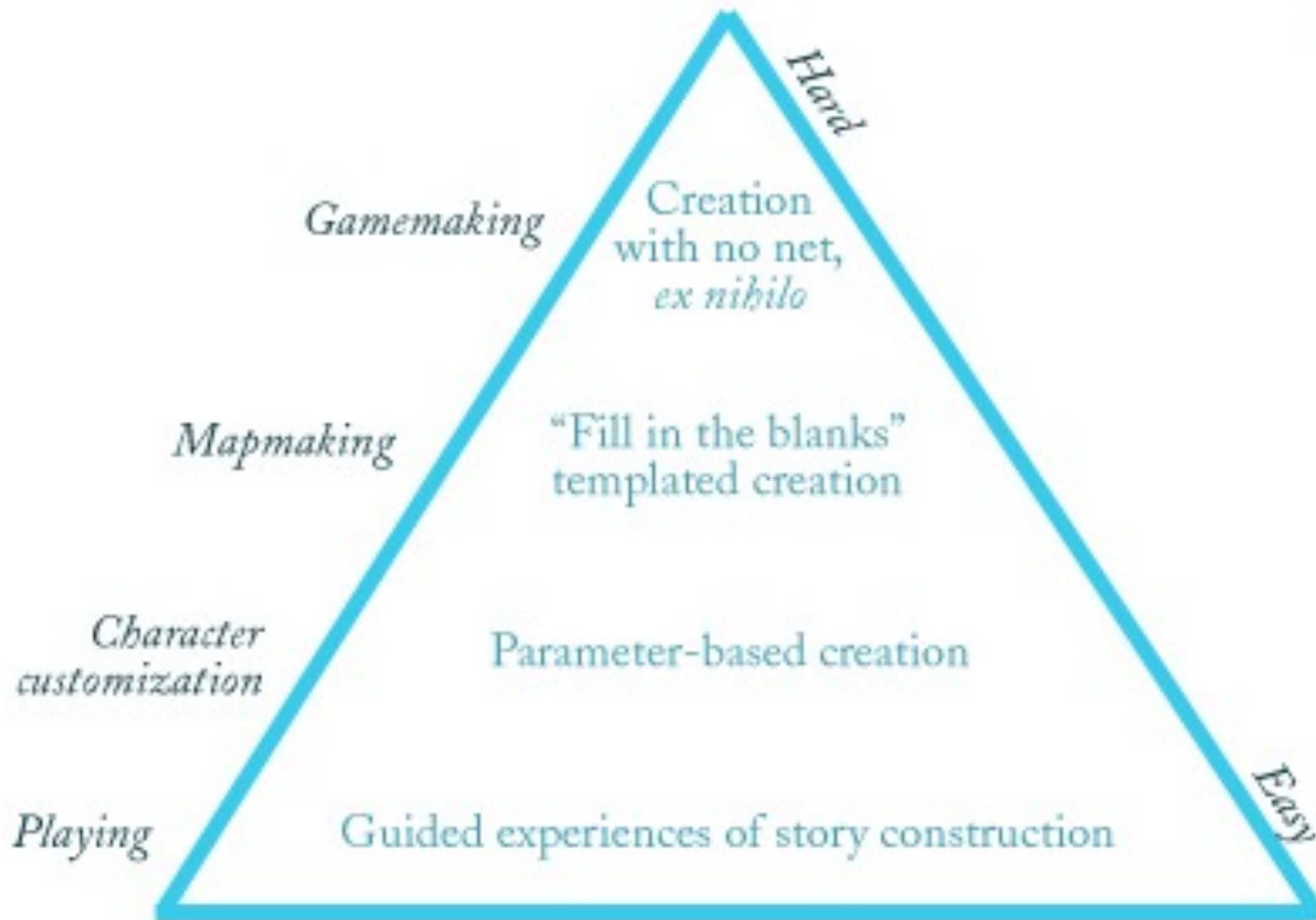
- Responsive to input
- Users induce computer behavior
- Codified rendering of responsive behaviors



Google/Yahoo Groups



- **1%** of the user population might start a group (or a thread within a group)
- **10%** of the user population might participate actively, and actually author content whether starting a thread or responding to a thread-in-progress
- **100%** of the user population benefits from the activities of the above groups (lurkers)



Participatory

- Kodak “Brownie Camera”
in 1888
 - First rolled film
 - “Celebrate the moments of your life”
 - “You press the button and we do the rest.”



Participatory



The screenshot shows the homepage of 'The Sims Carnival BETA'. The top navigation bar includes links for Home, Games, My Studio, Create, Upload, and Forums. A search bar is located on the right. The main content area is divided into three columns: 'Play', 'Create', and 'Share'. The 'Play' column lists various game features. The 'Create' column highlights three tools: 'The Wizard', 'The Swapper', and 'The Game Creator'. The 'Share' column describes community features like building a community, embedding games, and commenting. On the right side, there is a 'Player Login' section with input fields for email and password, and a 'Create an Account!' section with a sign-up button. The footer contains the date 'Sunday, September 23, 12'.

Login : Create an Account

Home | Games | My Studio | Create | Upload | Forums

Home > Log-in

Search

Here, you are the game developer!

Create them. Play them. Even share them...the games are in your hands!

The Sims Carnival is in development and accessible now to members of the closed Beta testing group. To apply for closed Beta membership, and provide input towards the evolution of this Site, please **sign up now**.

If you're already a member of our special closed Beta membership, log in and join in the fun!

Play.

- Enjoy a variety of cool, trendy, funny games, all for free
- Compete against other players and earn bragging rights by achieving high scores
- Discover different types of games you didn't even know existed!

Create.

- The Wizard**
Leads you through creating a game, step-by-step
- The Swapper**
Lets you customize existing games with your own images
- The Game Creator**
Empowers you to create games from scratch

Share.

- Build a community around your own game creations!
- Embed your favourite games on your blog or social networking site, and let everyone see your handwork! (available after closed Beta)
- Tell others about what you think by commenting on games and rating them - share the love!

Player Login

Got an EA/The Sims Carnival Account?
Login Here

Email Address :

Password :

[Forgot Password?](#)

Remember me on this computer

Create an Account!

Sign up now for a special closed Beta membership!

What is The Sims Carnival™?

The Sims Carnival is a new online community and gaming experience from The Sims that makes game creation and sharing more accessible and fun than ever before.

The introduction of this new creative endeavor from The Sims is designed to convert millions of players into game designers - no programming skills required!

Sign up now to get in on the fun and become part of The Sims Carnival community!

Participatory

>> Anonymous 09/16/08(Tue)22:21:3 No.85688831

Ok guys. Here's the link that was previously posted:

http://rapidshare.com/files/145913483/The_Incident.rar.html

It doesn't have much, but it's all the screens that I found today. SOMEONE PLEASE find a way to put this in the news. How can we let our Vice President be so incompetent that she uses YAHOO mail and even uses a password that was easily hacked?!?!

For the future of America...

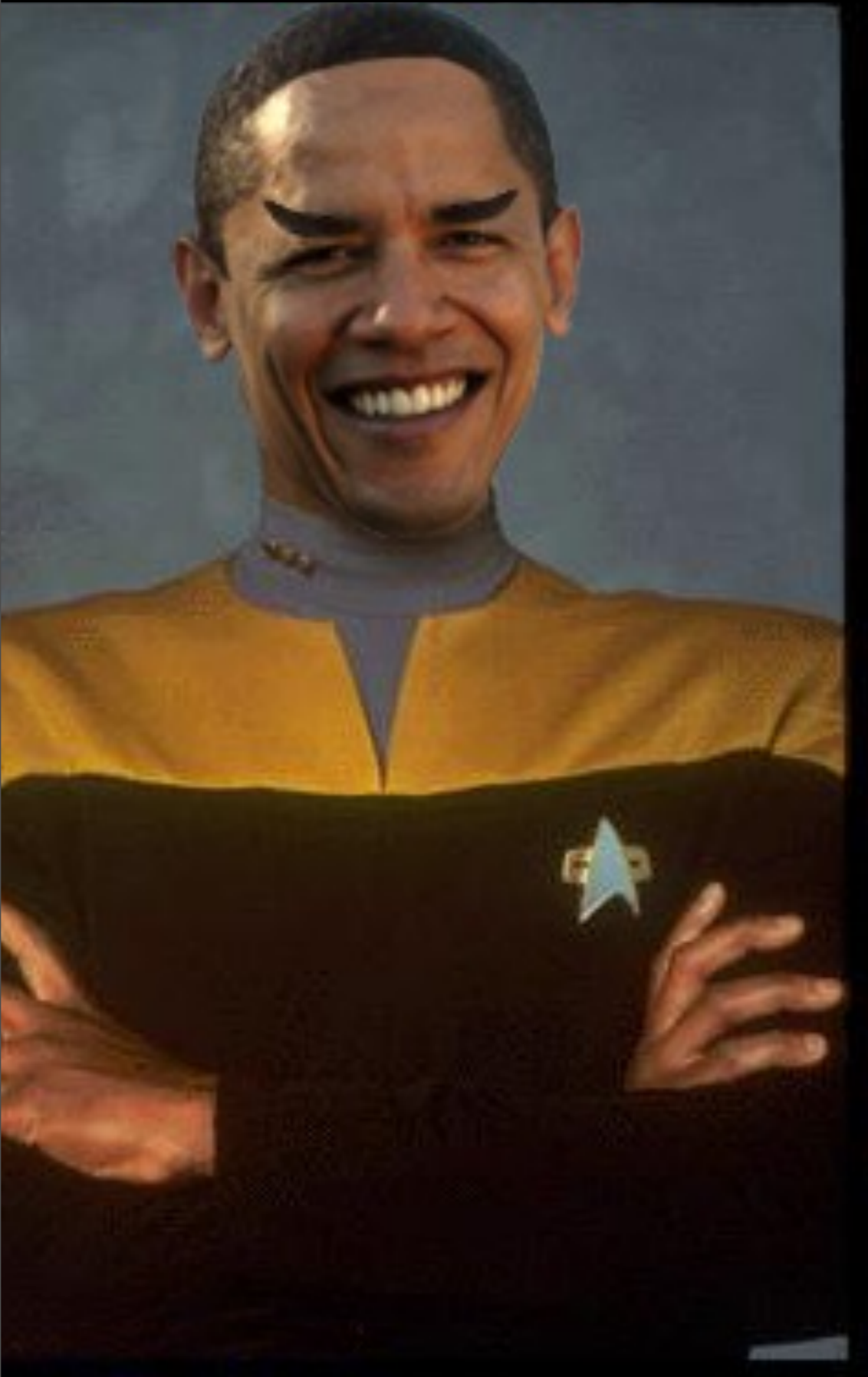
but more importantly, for the immortality of /b/, because if We reveal this, We will sway the elections. We will have an effect on the future of the USA. It doesn't matter whether you're American, British, French, Chinese (lol, communism), or whatever, because right now, You are a /b/tard. You are Anonymous. You do not forgive. You do not forget. Do what Anonymous would do, and that is to screw up this woman's career.

The Incident

The day Anonymous changed the world.
Check 4chanarchive for more info. (85666076)



Participatory



Spatial

- Represent navigable space we can move through
- The story of 'Windows' operating system
- 2D mapping of links or files on a page
- Virtual reality

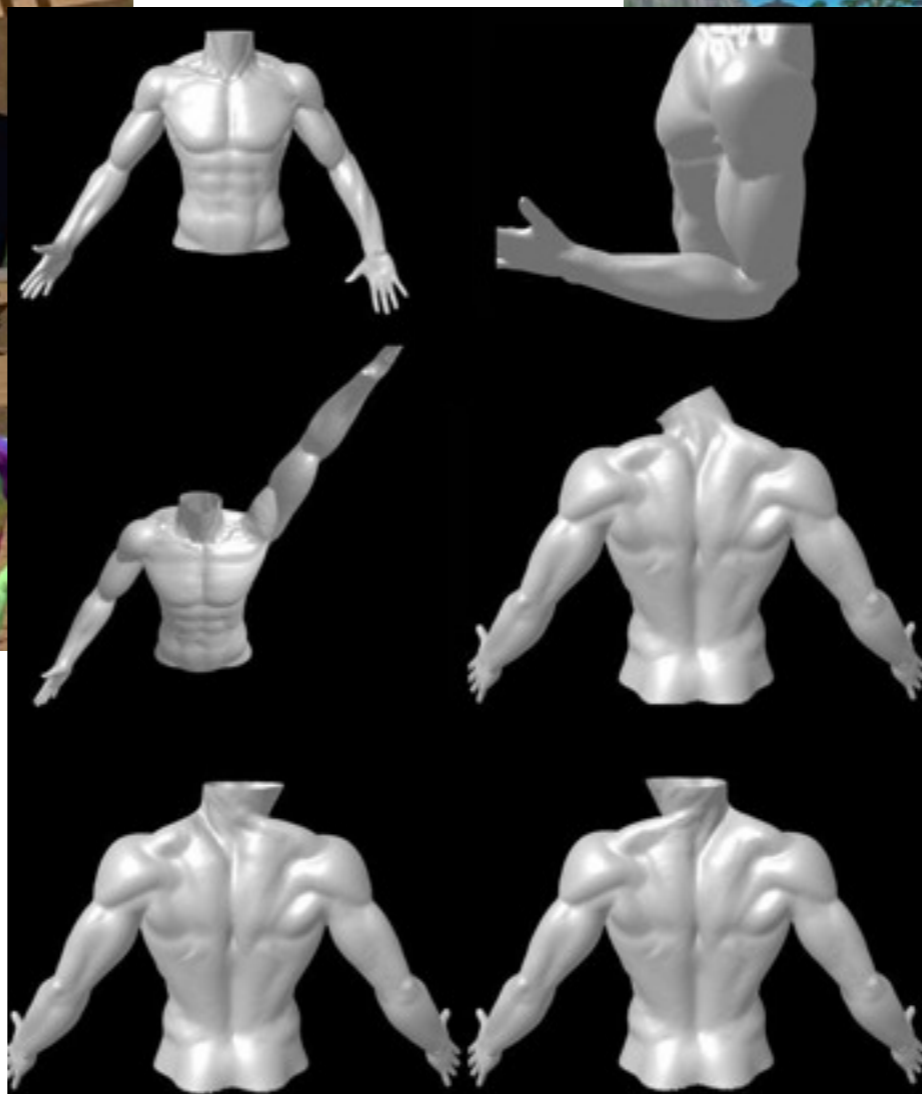
Spatial

- Represent navigable space we can move through
- The story of 'Windows' operating system
- 2D mapping of links or files on a page
- Virtual reality
- Chris Crawford sees space as a limiting factor for videogames: "screw graphics"
 - Spatial reasoning leads to contestations
 - Social reasoning leads to negotiations

Encyclopedic

- Most capacious medium ever invented
- Infinite resources
- Extending human memory
 - oral to written to computational
- Accessible, immediate global information

Encyclopedic



Interactive and Immersive

- **Procedural, Participatory** make up most of what we mean by the vaguely used word *interactive*
- **Spatial, Encyclopedic** help to make digital creations seem as explorable and extensive as the actual world, making up much of what we mean when we say that cyberspace is *immersive*.

Why **advance**
these **Affordances?**

Why Advance these Affordances?

- New ways to make and share meaning
- Fulfill Potential
 - Individually
 - Collectively
 - Of the computer itself
- Gain Agency in Technoculture
 - Comprehend the contemporary world in richer ways
 - Think, model, and act non-linearly, systematically, and procedurally
 - Mass, Public Collaboration
 - Redistribution of Power

Transparency and Truth

- “Eventually all successful story-telling technologies become ‘transparent’: we lose consciousness of the medium and see neither print nor film but only the power of the story itself. If digital art reaches the same level of expressiveness as these older media, we will no longer concern ourselves with how we are receiving the information. **We will only think about what truth it has told us about our lives.**”

—Janet Murray

Post-Medium Condition

- "The general digitization of channels and information erases the differences among individual media.... Inside the computers themselves everything becomes a number: quantity without image, sound, or voice. And once optical fiber networks turn formerly distinct data flows into a standardized series of digitized numbers, **any medium can be translated into any other.**"

—Friedrich Kittler

Questions?