THE DESIGN OF AN ALTERNATE REALITY GAME:
THE ARCANE GALLERY OF GADGETRY

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We all learn about history: the facts, the dates, the big events, and the people involved in them. These are the things that historians have taken time to record.

Sometimes we forget that we are reading a historian’s account of what happened, and not what actually happened. Sometimes it is too easy to hear one side of the story and forget that there ever was another. We often read about wars from the perspective of the people who won. For instance, we know why Americans fought the Revolutionary War with Great Britain. But do we know why Great Britain was fighting back? Americans saw Great Britain as an oppressor and bully. But how do you think Great Britain saw Americans?

History is not black and white. There is always another perspective. There is always another person’s story to hear, even about those events we think we know so much about. Yet, as time goes by, some of these stories have been lost. Some have even been deliberately covered up. There will always be gaps in what we know.

It is in these gaps that we find another kind of history—the secret history of the world.
Be warned. If you pursue the secrets of history, they just might start to pursue you.

It’s not too late to turn back. All you have to do is leave this webpage now, and forget you ever saw it.

But if it’s the truth you’re after and you dare to know more, then read on and begin to unfold the secrets of the Junto. If you’re really brave, take the True Junto Oath.

Just don’t say we didn’t warn you...

Read

Take

a history of the real American Junto

the true Junto Oath
By 1764, however, there is no further record of the Junto. Franklin wrote of its beginning in his autobiography, but never wrote of its end. As much as we’d love to report that the **JUNTO LIVES**, one thing is certain—the Junto disappeared from the public face of history, never to be heard of again.

*Those who wished to join the Junto had to complete an Oath...*
THE JUNTO OATH

some of your 57 classmates
Welcome to the Junto of Enlightened Naturalists and Inventors for a United Society (JENIUS).
You have uncovered Academy No. 1171706, our new online Academy. That tells us you must have been looking for it, although we do not yet know your reasons.

If you wish to join the ranks of JENIUS, know that we welcome anyone who holds to our three main principles: Science, Industry, and Morality.

However, because we dedicate ourselves to the discovery of all truth in this world, we must be honest up front. We have many enemies. Times are not as simple for JENIUS as they once were, and Academy No. 1171706 is no conversation club like Benjamin Franklin’s original Junto. It is an Academy designed with a specific mission, and a dangerous one at that.
All new members will have to race against time to overcome challenges and puzzles, crack codes, and uncover long-buried secrets before it is too late.

If you are brave and honest, join our ranks, and Enter the Academy.

**USER LOGIN**

Username: *

Password: *

Log in
WELCOME TO JENIUS ACADEMY 1171706

Submitted by Ambassador on Sat, 2011-04-02 06:17

JENIUS welcomes you to Academy No. 1171706! This temporary Academy has been formed for the purpose of one mission alone, but it is a mission that will decide the fate of this country, and possibly even the entire world.

There is no time to waste. Familiarize yourself with the Academy, the Junto Code, and your fellow JENIUS trainees and members. Listen to my instructions, as also posted to you in my letter, below.

BE WARNED: If you have made it this far and you are a member of SCAR, we should not bother trying to reason with you, but old habits die hard. You are not welcome here. Turn back now. Your spies WILL be found out.

Dear JENIUS Applicant,

You have taken the first steps toward joining the ranks of the Junto of Enlightened Naturalists and Inventors for a United Society [JENIUS]. JENIUS traces its origins back to 1727 when Benjamin Franklin created the club he called the Junto. At first, this was only a conversation club. However, in 1764, when Franklin decided to erase the Junto from the public eye and reestablish it as a secret society, JENIUS was born.
ORDERS, MISSIONS, BADGES

ARCHIVIST MISSION #3
Archivists: The Storytellers

INVENTOR MISSION #2
Inventors: The Innovators

SURVEYOR MISSION #2
Cryptographers: The Investigators Surveyors: The Explorers

CRYPTOGRAPHER MISSION #1
JENIUS Cryptographer Training Mission #1. MORSE CODE

Badges

JENIUS Member
TOOK THE ORDER Quiz
Profile Complete
Welcome, New Members!

Submitted by April G. on Mon, 2012-04-04 22:03

This is April G. I made you all a video to say hi and welcome you into the Academy (if I'd known you were here already, I'd have welcomed you anyway). Check it out.

I'm really excited all of you are here. Just in time, too.

Blake » April G. As a chrypotographer, it is difficult to read your morse code. please give me a hint

Shey_Bby05 » Morgan05 Hi Morqann>What Mission Are you Doing?

Taylor Elizabeth Yay 2 badges down 1 to go!!!

Jazibeth' » TonyV05 I Just Got Another Onee! :)

Blake ifell like a boy scout when i get a badge ... so proud of myself.
ALTERNATE REALITY GAME
(ARG)

ARCANE GALLERY OF GADGETRY
ALTERNATE REALITY GAMES

Entertainment/Marketing

❖ The Beast
❖ I love Bees
❖ The Lost Experience
❖ Metacortex

❖ Cathy’s Book
❖ Personal Effects: Dark Arts
❖ 39 Clues
❖ Trackers

“Serious Games” (Education)

❖ World Without Oil
❖ Evoke
❖ Pheon
❖ ARGOSI
AN ARG IS...

- An interactive narrative – *Storytelling as Archaeology*¹
- In real-time, using the real world as a game-board
- “This is Not a Game” (TINAG)
- Content embedded in multiple media types and tools
- Malleable
- Collaboration Required to Uncover the Story

ARGS AND NEW LITERACIES

- Players engage in Literacy Practices
  - Gather, evaluate information
  - Think creatively, critically, “counter-factually”

- Embedded in Authentic Environments
  - Everyday communications tools are the controls (wikis, blogs, cell phones, email, print…)

- Potential for Transferability
  - You, not a character you are portraying, are trying to unravel the mystery or solve the puzzle
ARG DESIGN ISSUES

Scalability
Narrative Pace and Placement
Challenges/Puzzles
Rewards
Real or Imaginary? (TINAG vs TIAG)
Motivation/Engagement
Assessment
Tools/Technologies
Archiving

Participation/Collaboration
Learning Objectives
Reusability/Replayability
Competition
DESIGN CHALLENGE

- Preserving “This is Not A Game” (TINAG)
- Enabling thoughtful information evaluation

Is this real? It's not a game to me.
Is there room for gray in real vs not-real (fact or fiction)?
IMAGINARY REAL

It's like beliefs.
DESIGN CASE: AGOG SEASON “1” INITIAL RESULTS

🌟 Survey responses

• How real it felt
• The fact that I was saving history
• That I actually got into it and had fun
• The teamwork that was needed to solve it
• How serious everyone took the process
• It keeps you thinking
• How intricate it was
• I felt like a detective / spy!!
RESEARCH CONTEXT

- Interviews with experienced ARG designers
- Design Sessions with Kidsteam
- Surveys & design docs from MLS students who created lesson plans for AGOG
- Design process/launch of 3 ARGs
  - AGOG “Season 1” (middle schoolers)
  - AGOG undergraduate version
  - Run Red’s Road (developed by teens and librarians for Carroll County Public libraries)
ARG DESIGN IMPLICATIONS

- Story Content Embedded and Matched to Technology types/affordances
- Collective Responsibility to End-Game
- Take advantage of gaps in historical record to traverse from “fact” to “fiction” –
  - Real to Alternate Perspectives
THANK YOU!

www.justnoevil.org   www.juntolives.org

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