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5-22-14

## Blinking Along

So in this game Minecraft, you enter the world as an anonymous survivor stranded in the middle of nowhere. Your lone ability at the start of the game is to crudely bash away at the land around you until it crumbles apart. You realize that after you do this, you can take that piece of the world and put it wherever you wish. A few hours (or days) later, you've turned the surrounding landscape into your virtual fortress, a place that means as much to you as anything you've ever created in real life.

The video game's ultimate allure is its ability to wrench you out of our seat by the head, swing you around and drop you right into a universe of any conceivable design. The only limitation on your experience is whatever developers can or can't come up with. So it's really no wonder why in only a few decades, the game industry grew from a few nerds coding in their garages to... Well, to a lot of nerds coding in big, nice buildings. But there are a lot more of them now, and they get paid a lot more to do so, which is good.

I won't bore you with the whole question of whether or not "kids these days are getting too addicted to them there vidjya games." But imagine a world in the not too distant future, when most natural resources have been exhausted and the standard of living is falling to seemingly dark ages levels. But technology is still around, and one technology in particular seems to be the driving force behind humanity: a massively multiplayer online universe accessible through affordable virtual reality headsets and gloves. Stored in this game is a seemingly endless array of worlds and objectives to explore, as well as the ability to collect items and build a space for yourself that can look however you want it to. Oh, and there's access to every imaginable piece of human media that ever was or will be created. Basically,

it's the end-all-be-all of video games, one that is so widespread among humanity that what goes in within the game can be as (or more) important than what happens outside of it.

With this kind of setup you're bound to get a pretty decent-sized group of people who spend a lot more time in this virtual world than in the (admittedly, rather shitty) real one. Now, in society as we know it today, research and conventional wisdom tell us that it's not wise to spend a majority of your waking moments playing games. So what if the circumstances of your day-to-day existence were so dire that escaping into a virtual world of endless possibilities was your only easy escape from the drudgery of an impoverished existence? It'd be a no brainer. But even in that case, how much is too much? Could society ever be rebuilt if everyone spent their hours focused on a glorified computer game?

Everything in moderation. The internet and technology are wonderful things, and will continue to change the world for the better as they both keep proliferating. But too much of pretty much anything isn't good for you, and spending too much time preoccupied with technology isn't healthy. We all know that.

But technology and the escapism associated with it are now and forever linked, and I think that even in a world that isn't all shitty and post apocalyptic, virtual experiences in *any* medium are of importance to humanity, because a life without escapism would be a very boring one. Books, television, movies, games, they appeal to us for a reason. They wash over you like a full moon's tide, enveloping you in the beautiful uncertainty of a new experience, and everything you gain from that experience shapes not only you as a person but those around you, because on some small level, the work of others that you appreciate has an immediate effect on your personality and way of thinking. And the author of every work that has ever existed is *also* a product of that process. You as a person are a culmination of

your experiences, so I see no problem with using virtual ones to broaden humanity's horizons. It's a beautiful thing, this cycle.