Saturday, November 3. 2007

Strike Rapier: We need more information

Strike Rapier posted his "manifesto" before all of the other candidates in the AWTeen election, way back on October 21. Currently leading the polls, Strike seemed all but guaranteed a win in the election. However, with the recent announcement that GC had been eliminated from the race, Matthew appears to be gaining votes from GC and his supporters, shortening the gap.

Strike Rapier starts off well in his platform by stating that he would appoint two "co-Caretakers," Silverliner and s e V e n s. Both are good candidates for the positions, should they accept. Interestingly, Strike has chosen to limit his administration to two co-Caretakers, whereas Matthew has insisted on three people for the job. Having fewer co-Caretakers may increase the workload on the main Caretaker somewhat, but enacting such a policy also reduces the security risk of the Caretaker privilege password being divulged.

In my last post about Matthew, I didn't cover the issue of security at all, so I will comment on it here. Ever since Activeworlds 3.1 was released (or was it 3.2?), the Caretaker has had the right to issue a single command to wipe out all the property in the world. Whereas before that release the Caretaker had little more power than anyone else except the ability to set world rights and change the welcome message, now the Caretaker can destroy the entire world if (s)he so chooses.

Thus, Strike's policy of limiting access to the privilege password is a step in the right direction, although it does not go far enough. Ideally, he would limit use of the password to one co-Caretaker instead of two. Having one person with the password provides enough coverage for when Strike is offline, which in reality is almost never anyway.

That line of reasoning brings me to perhaps Strike's greatest strength - how often he is online. Strike Rapier said himself that he has a considerable amount of cash invested in Activeworlds in general, and thus has a financial incentive to see the technology succeed. With AWTeen one of the flagship worlds in the AW universe, Strike actually stands to make money from his tenure as Governor, albeit indirectly - because the more people that use AW, the more are likely to purchase his bots and use his services. He will be extremely motivated to improve AWTeen to its best possible state just for this reason.

On the other hand, the potential for raising money could also lead to a loss of focus. Strike could become distracted from AWTeen by development of his Eclipse Evolution bot or a number of other projects. He has said publicly that he sees himself as "a mentor to those below [him]." Strike plans to take a more inactive role in the governorship by letting his committee leaders run the world and by resolving disputes that rise up to his level. While not necessarily a bad approach, Strike needs to watch out that his time isn't taken up by other tasks because the world seems to be running "just fine." Tony M continued development of his bots while Caretaker of AWTeen, and we know how his online time was limited as well.

Also, Strike makes no mention of his position towards transparency. While some leaders believe that some discussions should remain confidential, others go to the extreme and reveal only what is necessary. Since Strike will be implementing a committee system, I am curious to find out exactly how the decisions reached in the committee meetings will be distributed to the public. The public has a perception that Strike is not open enough and continually manipulates events behind the scenes. Hopefully, Strike will respond to this post with a comment about his stance on openness and transparency.

Finally, Strike proposes to set up "city-zoned" regions in Eclipse Evolution. From what he has disclosed, the idea sounds impressive. However, Strike has not stated exactly who would have permission to define zones, and who would handle the numerous requests to do so. One could imagine that Strike will quickly become overwhelmed when everyone wants his or her build "city-zoned" if he himself implements the zoning. If he plans to allow anyone to create a zone, people could take advantage of that permission and cause vandalism. Either way, this proposal is a problem.

Overall, it seems that Strike Rapier simply needs to provide more information about many of his proposals. What he has stated is not sufficient for a user to make an informed judgment about whether or not to vote for him. Let's wait until Strike fleshes out some of his proposals more fully before making a call on whether or not he would make a good Caretaker.

Posted by Brant in Campaigns at 12:27

Zones would be at the power of the CT only, as changes need to be made via the scripting or the GUI - Im thinking major areas, more environments than each city.

I cannot say what will happen regarding how much I will disclose, because thats not possible before the situation comes up. Id imagine most things will be discussed with only those concerned though.
Anonymous on Nov 4 2007, 05:56