Saturday, October 27. 2007

Major events: the lifeblood of AWTeen

Recently, Matthew asked me a hypothetical question: if there were only the resources to enact one change to AWTeen without any remaining for anything else, what would that one change be? I answered the query without hesitation: AWTeen needs to host a major event, and needs to do it in a well-organized fashion within a reasonable timeframe.

GC has said many times that he liked AWTeen's Inauguration and Generations Days and considers them to be the best events the world has ever seen. While I agree that those were great events, they happened half a decade ago! What has (or has not) happened since that people are still talking about events that happened five years ago? AWTeen should be talking about how last month's event was a success, not those that occurred five years ago.

Activeworlds in general is currently in a slump of major events. In fact, other than the Cy Awards, there haven't been any significant events in the past year - and even the Cy Awards was marred by technological breakdowns. A headline on Mark Randall (Strike Rapier)'s website states it best: "AWNews notes Activeworlds has no News." This lack of news and events comes, puzzlingly, at a time where interest in the main AW universe has increased. In early 2007, universe user totals in the evenings lagged as low as 125, but on Friday, October 26, there were 200 users online at 11:50pm VRT. The lack of happenings certainly isn't a result of AWI support, either: since Flagg was rehired, bingo and other community events have continually drawn respectable crowds, and prizes are regularly awarded.

A major event differs from the regular paintball matches and trivia games in that it stretches across worlds and appeals to members of the greater AW community. Generations and Inauguration Day were examples, but other examples include the AWTeen Reniassance Faire and the Thor weatherbot unveiling. The Reniassance Faire appealed to all because it allowed anyone to take on the personality of medieval personalities, and the Thor unveiling appealed because people wanted to see what the new technology was all about.

Major events are very important for three reasons:
They draw in people from the greater community and get them interested in AWTeen. Many people who attend either have not heard of or have not paid attention to AWTeen before. By entering the world and participating in events, they get to see what the world has to offer. The #1 contributor to new visitors has always been people who discovered the world through big events.
They increase respect for AWTeen within the greater Activeworlds community. A successful and well-organized event endows prestige upon its organizers. People who once saw AWTeen as a haven for "inept kids" or "forum trolls" might change their opinions after enjoying a major event.
They provide the interior AWTeen community something that defines itself and unites people as a group. They create a sense of community, rather than a set of people who build together. Major events require a lot of effort to put on, and many people contribute to their creation. From building to programming to modeling, everyone comes together for a specific cause.
I propose that hosting a major event is the best way to solve the problem of AWTeen's current power struggles and infighting. Simply put, not much is going on now, and people who don't have anything else to do and no greater cause to follow will fight with each other. If everyone got involved in the coordinating of a major event, the focus would shift from the politics to the fun. And hosting an event is a concrete goal that can be achieved in the four-month term of the next Governor.

To add to that, there has never been a better opportunity for organizing a major event than now. Virtual worlds are going through a phase of "rebirth" - a "second coming." It was recently announced that there was over $1 billion invested in virtual worlds across all platforms in the last year. While AW may currently be dwarfed by other online worlds, it stands to share in this huge influx of interest and cash. AW's population has clearly turned around and is now increasing, and despite its struggles AWTeen is the largest and most active community in Activeworlds. If AWTeen can demonstrate it has the mettle to host giant events, it stands to benefit tremendously from the increasing numbers joining the community.

I challenge the next administration to set producing a major event during its tenure as its number one priority. Without events, AWTeen is just another public building world with a few extra features. Let's start brainstorming right now in the comments as to what form this event could take.

Posted by Brant in Proposals at 07:11

My three and a half cents (Exchange rates);

[back on topic]
Events are important!

Look at the world numbers during major events...My new years events had been seeing user numbers from 30 to upward of 80 people for years...then I stopped doing it last year because my computer exploded (not literally); One has to consider that when they bash events so quickly;

Imagine if we could have a conistent event team...

I've been talking to jag and matt about it..the best way IMHO is to establish a schedule

Meeting Mondays
Trivia Tuesdays
Wacky Wire Wednesday

and so on...then have 1 friday a month (unless it NEEDS to fall on a holiday or anniversary) in which you hold a major event.

the full schedule I sent matt adds consistency and also allows for new events on the friday and saturday slots...

by setting up specific weekly times and prizes you give users a sense of security and don't need to over advertise an event to get four people to show up;

Notice how GZ hasnt had an events calander since what dec 2003?

lol@that
Anonymous on Oct 28 2007, 11:12

That's interesting - until you pointed it out, I had not noticed that GZ was lacking a calendar and had been for some time. But it must have been shorter than that, right?
Anonymous on Oct 28 2007, 12:06