

Probably One Of The Worst Ideas/Questions I Have Ever Posed: "Is There Any Community-Building Opportunity in The On-Line Game Zero AD?"

Post by "Cassius" of October 27, 2022 at 7:26 PM



This question comes to mind partly because of a comment [Joshua](#) made recently, and partly because I was wasting time on the internet today watching an interview with a professor who was singing the praises of the free internet multiplayer game "Zero AD."

In my own case probably the very last thing I need to do is to spend more time on the computer away from the outside world, but I gather that online gaming is extremely popular so it's probably worth the question:

Is it possible that setting up an online Epicurean community in one of these role-playing games would be a worthwhile project? I gather that these games are not wholly devoted to war games anymore, and I am wondering if it might be interesting, and attractive to younger people, if we were to set up an explicitly ancient-world Epicurean community (the Villa of the Papyri before Vesuvius) and then conduct learning / teaching events in such an online community. The major gap in my knowledge is whether these communities provide an environment where discussion/teaching/socializing is easy to do, or whether it is all blood and guts.

Joshua please confirm for me that this is the worst idea ever and I'll leave it alone. However it seems to me that the question is probably worth asking, so maybe some others here who have more experience with this kind of thing can suggest whether there is any potential for a project in that direction or not.

All I have done is looked at the home page of <http://play0ad.com> and I don't have any idea whether this is feasible or a good idea or not.

Anyone?

Post by "Joshua" of October 27, 2022 at 9:51 PM

Probably a non-starter in this particular game. I did actually play *0 A.D.* a few years ago, and recall it being unusually difficult for a Real Time Strategy game. The object in RTS games, *traditionally*, is to gather resources, build a base, field an army, and destroy the enemy. These games are usually designed in such a way that the average match lasts around an hour.

What you are proposing would be *very* unusual for a game like this, and would be more appropriate for something like a minecraft server or some other sandbox game. The kind of game where there are no real goals, and nothing one actually *must* do.

Post by “Cassius” of October 27, 2022 at 10:28 PM

Sometimes I think my own world is a virtual reality so I don't need another, but the general space probably bears watching. I have lost track over the last ten or more years of what these online games really do, but I presume that they are growing increasingly popular.

Maybe then the main use of the thread - to the extent it continues at all - should be to keep an open dialog on how new technologies and online gaming interactions (not purely discussions like here) might be adapted to community-building.

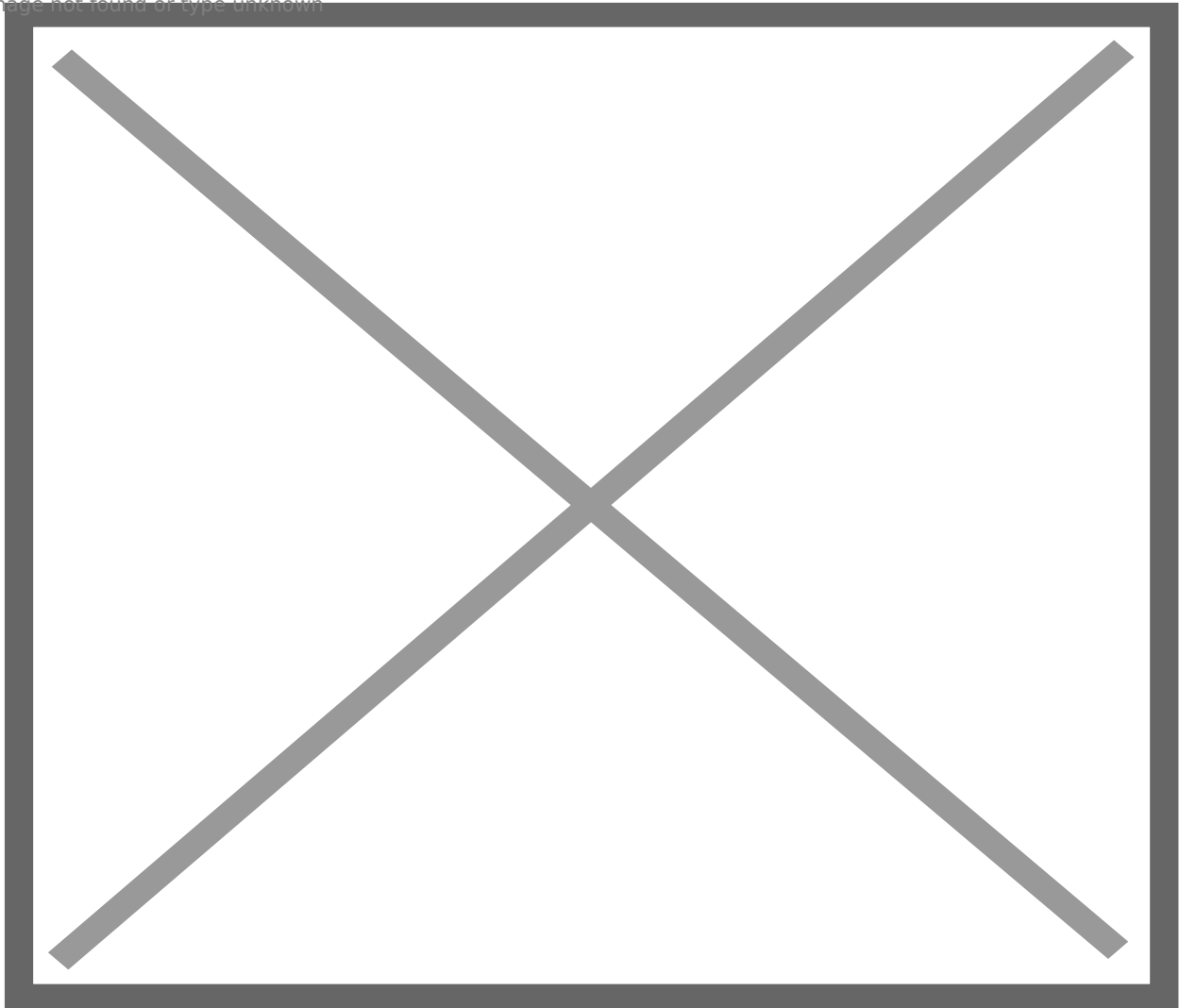
I probably should have tagged [Charles](#) here too as he might be in closest touch with the latest developments. And possibly @Nate for both his age and creativity. And I think [Onenski](#) is college or post graduate too.

Post by “Onenski” of October 27, 2022 at 11:16 PM

I agree with Joshua on how Minecraft (or any similar virtual space) would be more appropriate, but I'm not sure if it's the most efficient way to spread epicurean philosophy in younger people. I found an article (link below) on how some people do their job meetings in videogames: GTA, Animal Crossing, Minecraft, etc. However, I think it works with people they already know, not for integrate new people. In those cases, they didn't want to have more Zoom meetings. My opinion is that so far our Zoom meetings and the forum itself are good enough for the creation of an epicurean community.

Perhaps tiktoks or (more) videos in YouTube may have more impact in attracting new younger people.

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[Executives are getting together in video games, to bond, brainstorm or rampage. \(Published 2020\)](#)

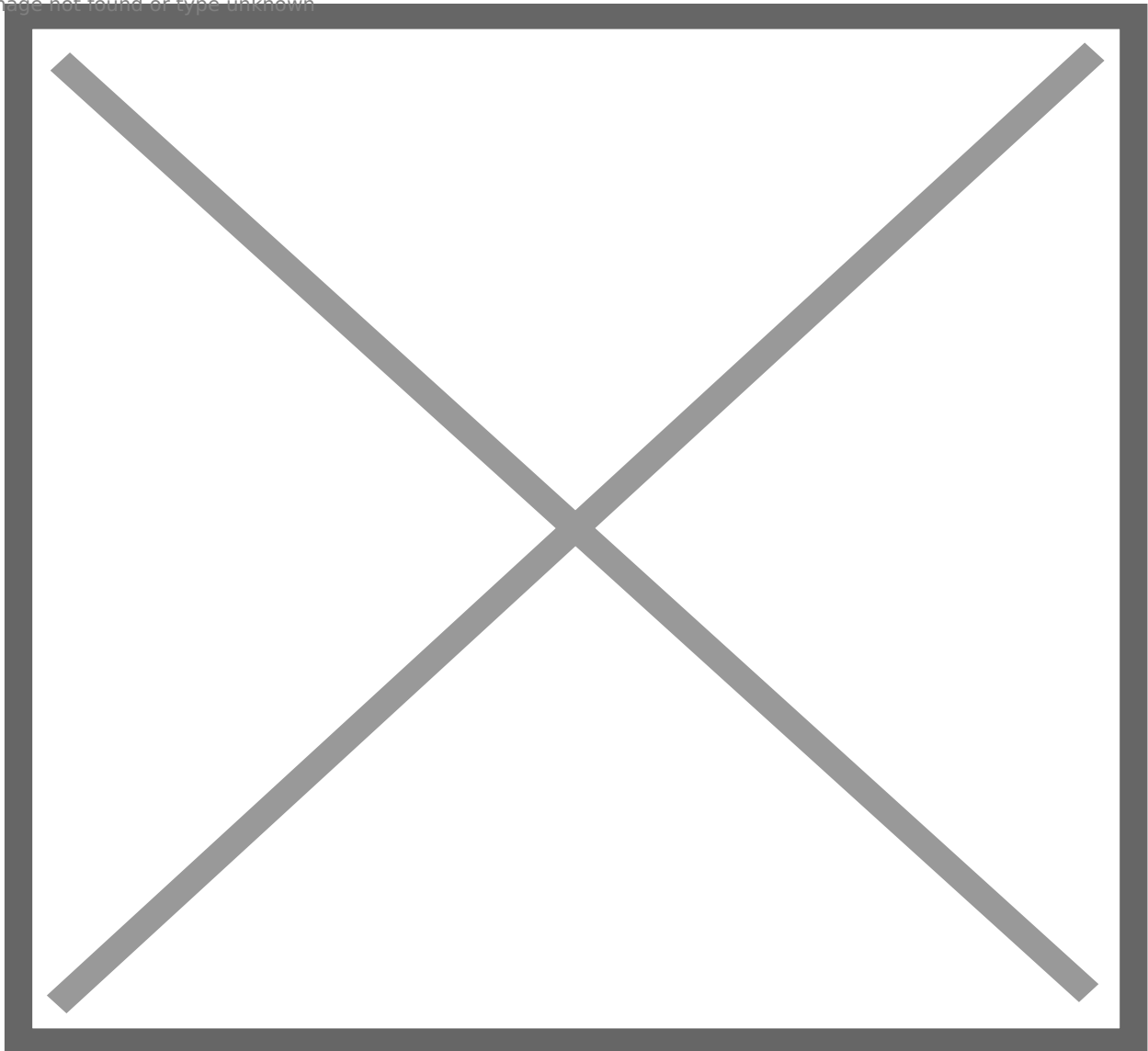
www.nytimes.com

Post by “Don” of October 27, 2022 at 11:35 PM

This whole virtual environment thing has been talked about as the "next big thing" and "we'll all be meeting and working and playing in [fill in the big virtual world system]" for at least 20+ years. I remember when everyone was going to be meeting and working and playing in Second Life:

<http://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/2722-probably-one-of-the-worst-ideas-questions-i-have-ever-posed-is-there-any-communi/>

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[Second Life - Wikipedia](#)

en.wikipedia.org

There were going to be conferences and libraries and exhibits and who knows what else in Second Life. Evidently, it's still a thing according to Wikipedia but I never hear about it.

Now, it's Meta and Zuckerberg's Metaverse.. and that's evidently hemorrhaging money and credibility.

I agree with [Onenski](#) . Stick with online dedicated meetings, YouTube, and (if there was actually a dedicated infrastructure and staff) social media. But social media takes consistent content creation and engagement... and there aren't enough "staff" in the Garden to keep that up.

Post by “Martin” of October 28, 2022 at 3:28 AM

Second Life seems to be close to what Cassius aims at.

A neighbor of mine uses it regularly to meet friends who live in Scotland. In addition to joking around, he plays virtual orchestra with them.

I am Maetes4 in Second Life. However, Maetes4 has hardly done anything in the first few months and has been in a coma for the last several years since then. I just checked: It seems there is an "Epicurus Beach" in Second Life but it seems that that one refers only to hedonistic activities and not the philosophy. Moreover, there are 3 "Epicurean" sims or whatever, but they are for adult rated and other entertainment. There is no Epicurean Garden or Kepos yet. If there is sufficient interest among us, we can consider building one and see how many people come in to explore the place. However, while playing is for free, building a place might cost something.

Post by “Don” of October 28, 2022 at 5:11 AM

[Purchasing Land](#)

Steps and resources on how purchasing land in Second Life works. Whether auction or direct buy, the choice is yours.

secondlife.com

Post by “Cassius” of October 28, 2022 at 6:42 AM

I would never have suspected that Martin would be the one of us to have experience with this! My own perspective was pretty much like Don's - been hearing about this forever but not seeing it actually come into being. However I know as I get older that I lose touch with certain things so I wanted to check. I am actually a little surprised that something like it hasn't made more progress.

Don's also right that we have a great need for content creators and until I can find more time myself I am struggling to keep just the podcast and weekly zoom going.

Maybe that was part of why the idea came to mind - projects that attract interest in part through the effort of the participants themselves (second life) is probably a smart thing to keep

open to adding.

If anyone is into a particular project like Second Life and wants to brainstorm for a while that's probably the first step.

Post by “Kalosyni” of October 28, 2022 at 7:39 AM

This is all very interesting, however as I saw Don's post above about Second Life and how to purchase land in that virtual platform, it came to me that this isn't the same as actually having a physical headquarters -- such as forming a non-profit, renting office space, and having weekly/monthly meetings. So reading this thread brings up further ideas (because I think online gaming or virtual reality is not a good place for spreading Epicureanism).

Some possible ideas for moving forward:

1. Clarify and organize Epicurean philosophy into a system and format which can clearly and easily be taught (books, courses, pamphlets).
 2. Offer well organized online courses
 3. Outreach to atheist groups, attend atheist events to network, and hand out pamphlets
 4. Find enough supporters through outreach who get "on board" and then form a non-profit
 5. Find a good location to start a physical headquarters (near a college?)
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Post by “Cassius” of October 28, 2022 at 8:20 AM

Yes that's the eventual goal, but in the meantime and probably always it's good to keep an open eye to all reasonable possibilities. So definitely I am not suggesting that it's time to put any effort into a virtual world model, just that if there are people would in fact peruse those things we should be aware of any opportunities.

Post by “Charles” of October 28, 2022 at 9:55 AM

I've never heard of Zero A.D. but the first thing that came to my mind was Second Life and similar games such as VRChat or other outlets such as a MC Server & even GTARP. I've thought there to be some potential in MC or VRChat, as even during the pandemic some were switching boardroom and conference meetings via zoom/skype to Among Us or Garry's Mod.

That being said, while a (further) digital community might be out of the picture for now, it would be entertaining and quite novel to see a replication of famous Epicurean sites in one of these, the ruins of Herculaneum or a depiction of the Garden in Athens, etc.

Post by “Don” of October 28, 2022 at 10:30 AM

As far as virtual environments, I don't think they include the Garden (game is set earlier) but the YouTube channels that provide tours of ancient Greece via the game Assassin's Creed: Odyssey are pretty cool:

https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLkOo_Hy3liELnL_0p7__5gj6EzsNFLhgj

Open in YouTube for the full playlist.

I'm not a player myself but from what I understand they've done a good job of reconstruction.

Post by “Charles” of October 28, 2022 at 10:36 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

As far as virtual environments, I don't think they include the Garden (game is set earlier) but the YouTube channels that provide tours of ancient Greece via the game Assassin's Creed: Odyssey are pretty cool:

I'm not a player myself but from what I understand they've done a good job of reconstruction.

I've played Odyssey before. It's pretty accurate and some of the dialogue itself is mixed with Greek alongside English (or whatever language is chosen.) Samos is included in the game's map, but like you said it's set earlier, during the time of the start of the Peloponnesian War,

thus, Samos is known more for its wine and for Pythagoras.

Post by “Cassius” of October 28, 2022 at 12:44 PM

Oh I meant to add this earlier:. One of the reasons this came to mind was probably inspired by the example of "A Few Days In Athens" - I can imagine a similar scenario being sort of a model for an immersion game.

But I doubt it would be a good idea to model the actual garden and thereby have to deal with putting words in Epicurus ' or other actual historical figures' mouths. Frances Wright probably did a reasonably accurate job but even there she probably crossed some lines.

I would think another time and place - such as Herculaneum before the eruption - would probably be more analogous to us - people living well after Epicurus' death trying to learn and apply the philosophy in an Epicurean-,friendly setting without any of the actual characters being hijacked by living people who don't have the authority to speak for them.