

# Digital Immigrant Remedial Vocabulary

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**Alternate Realities** – A kind of online game in which clues or puzzles are supplied through web sites, email messages, phone calls, videos and faxes. Examples: Majestic (a now-defunct game from Electronic Arts) The Beast (A promotion for Spielberg's AI film), Lockjaw, and Uncap the Ride (promotional game in which winner gets a BMW), Noahbuddy, Search4E. The games are large puzzles which require multiple minds to solve. Players spontaneously join together in internet discussion groups to solve them. See Herold, Charles, "It's a Fantasy, but Real Life is Always In Play," The New York Times, March 6, 2003. Also, [www.unfiction.com](http://www.unfiction.com) , [www.deaddrop.us](http://www.deaddrop.us) , [www.argn.com](http://www.argn.com) .

**Avatars** – the representation of a person in a virtual world. Players in online games and other online activities typically create their own avatar, which is how other people in the game see them using a variety of tools built in to the game. Players take avatars very seriously, often spending many hours honing the avatar's look and experimenting with different looks along the way. In the not too distant future, other factors, such as the avatar's voice, will likely be controllable as well. Going one step beyond the anonymity of text chat, avatars, allow users to experiment with looking whomever they want and seeing how people react. For examples, see:

[http://darkmods.sourceforge.net/mods/avagall\\_ex.htm](http://darkmods.sourceforge.net/mods/avagall_ex.htm) ,

<http://www.planetquake.com/polycount/cottages/cokane/polycounters/entries.html>

**Blogs, blogging** – Blog is an abbreviation of Web log. Blogs are "diary" type online sites, with new postings published regularly (daily, weekly) by individuals or groups. Postings are generally a mixture of personal thoughts and Web links. People publishing blogs range from academics and CEO's of tech companies to ordinary individuals, including, most recently, soldiers at war. Blogs tend to link to other blogs, setting up an interesting network of ideas. Online software has emerged to make setting up and publishing a blog by anyone extremely easy. The blog phenomenon is notable because it provides a way for people to enter their own data and ideas into the web, which then becomes part

of a larger, searchable database. See <http://www.blogger.com/> (blogs of note), <http://cyberlaw.stanford.edu/lessig/blog/> (a high-end blog) .

**Grid Computing** – Grid Computing is the phenomenon of applying resources from many computers in a network—at the same time—to a single complex problem.. It is possible to link the power of unused processor cycles of individual PCs to do massive computer calculations, impossible on even supercomputers. SETI, the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence, was one of the first projects of this kind. Today interested people can have their computers help with everything from, SETI to cancer research to weather analysis. Projects linking the computers in a particular university into a grid are an as yet-underutilized computing resource. The flip side of grid computing is using large numbers of individual computers (or PDA's or cell phones) as sensors and data collection points. See <http://www.gridcomputing.com/> /

**Fantasy Sports** – One of the few phenomema on the Web that people are willing to pay for consistently, fantasy sports, where people trade players and manage teams in baseball, basketball, football, hockey, or (in Europe) soccer are generate tens of millions of dollars annually. Players typically create their own teams from the players in a major sports league, and if their teams do well, they win prizes and bragging rights. While picking and trading their tema members, players are basically engaged in statistics-based management. See <http://www.addictfantasysports.com/> , <http://www.fantasysportshq.com/>

**Instant Messaging (IM)** – IM allows you to have “chat” widows open with people anywhere in the word on your contact list. Experienced IMers often have several of these conversations, in separate windows going at once, and there can be multiple participants in a single IM chat. It is possible to create IM “bots” that automate certain tasks, such as bringing certain kinds of information into the IM window. See <http://computer.howstuffworks.com/instant-messaging.htm>

**LAN Parties** – Students (and others) will often set up 10 to 100 computers in a single location liked by an ad-hoc local area network set up for the occasion, in order to play multiplayer games. The LAN eliminates any discrepancies in connection time and puts players on an equal footing. See [http://www.marcprensky.com/writing/IITSEC%20Paper%202002%20\(536%20V2-Final\).pdf](http://www.marcprensky.com/writing/IITSEC%20Paper%202002%20(536%20V2-Final).pdf)

**Large Scale Gaming Competitions** – These are LAN parties taken to the extreme – Imagine a stadium filled with 6,000 computers, each brought by its owner, all networked together locally. Players come to these events (e.g. QuakeCon, The Gathering, the World Gaming Olympics) from all over the world and typically spend 3 to 6 consecutive days and nights continuously playing and competing.

Competitions are dominated by “cyber-athletes” who can take home six-figure purses. See

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**Logical Programming Languages** – Programming is fast leaving the realm only of the trained specialist, and becoming a tool of the average computer user. This trend includes languages such as “macros” in Microsoft Office and other programs, Javascript and html on the Web, and “high level” more user-friendly languages such as Visual Basic, Director, Authorware, and Flash. Even PowerPoint is, in fact, a programming language. In recent years these, plus the tools shipped with, or built alongside of games, have turned many non-technical people into programmers. The advent of “open systems” has made programming much more transparent, as people write code designed to be read and shared by others.

Most Digital Native computer users have done logical programming in some form (although it may not have been called that) and would be capable of using programming to automate many tasks, such as searching. Of course all search engine users must be taught at some point the basic “Boolean” expressions of and, or and not, as well as more advanced programming logic, in order to retrieve information efficiently.

**Massive Multiplayer Online Games** – “Massive” multiplayer, refers to groups of from several hundred thousand to up to one million all online and playing at once. The games that support this, such as EverQuest, Ultima Online, Asheron’s Call and Dark Age of Camelot in the US and Lineage in Korea, (with new games arriving frequently) are phenomena in which hundreds of thousand of players are online simultaneously. Their basic goal is character improvement, which is often achieved though cooperation to achieve common goals. This type of game, usually set in a “persistent” world which goes on even when a player leaves, is extremely addictive and time-consuming for many, and spawns an entire economy of tools and tool building and buying and selling on the periphery of the game. Millions around the world pay a monthly fee to play. The “role playing” games are known as MMORPGs. There are also other types of massively multiplayer online games, such as The Sims Online, or America’s Army which are played by equally large numbers of people, but in smaller groups at one time. See

[www.everquest.com](http://www.everquest.com) , <http://www.mmorpg.net/>

**Mods, Modding** – Many of today’s games, especially (but not exclusively) the first person perspective 3D world games are “open” to mods, (modifications) of an enormous number of their features, including the environment, the characters, and the gameplay. So much so that it is even entirely possible to construct an entirely new game. The game companies not only encourage this, but provide many of the tools needed to do so with the game or online. The reason for this is that the tools and the creation process increases the interest in, and thus the value of, the game. The Sims Online, for example, shipped the “modding” tools

four months before they shipped the actual game, greatly increasing buyer anticipation. See <http://www.modding-universe.com/index2.htm> and <http://www.euro-morrowind.com/modding/>

**Multimedia (as used today)** – The word multimedia has been with us since film strips and multiple screens, but the definition keeps expanding, as the technology increases and tools become available at a cost and ease of use that makes them available to anyone. 3D graphics, surround sound, even smells are all part of current “immersive” multimedia experiences, many of which can be created by today’s students. Sound has become much more important, as have “haptics” or physical participation through specialized controllers which includes physical feedback. The USC’s Annenberg School has an Institute for Multimedia Literacy, whose mission is explore literacy in a contemporary context and, through its research, bridge the traditions of the written and spoken word with the evolving landscape of modern communication. See <http://www.usc.edu/calendar/events/17927.html>

**Online Meeting** – The phenomenon of using the Web to find other people of common interests, for work, hobbies, gaming, socializing, dating, is a fast growing one. People find each other through game “lobbies,” community sites and portals, chat sites, dating sites, and organizational sites such as [www.meetup.com](http://www.meetup.com) .

**Online Reputation Systems** – When you buy something on e-Bay, how do you know the seller is reliable and will ship you the product? A host of online systems have arisen to assure the reputation of sellers, writers, pieces of information, etc. These usually involve ratings by people who interact with the people or use the products being rated. Sites with reputation systems include [www.epinions.com](http://www.epinions.com) , [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) , and <http://labs.google.com/cgi-bin/webquotes> .

**Peer-to-Peer** – This technology, also known as P2P and first publicized by Napster, is what allows people to exchange music, videos, papers, and anything else without going through a central storage database. The software is able to search individual machines for individual files made available by their owners. See [www.gnutella.com](http://www.gnutella.com) , [www.kazaa.com](http://www.kazaa.com) , [www.morpheus.com](http://www.morpheus.com)

**Smart Mobs** – The phenomenon of people online, who have in most cases never met, quickly organizing to get tasks done that they jointly consider important. This happens often in the gaming world where players organize to build new objects or levels for games. Other groups self-organize to achieve political ends, lodge protests, or solve puzzles. Howard Rheingold has written a book describing this phenomenon. See <http://www.smartmobs.com/index.html>

**Webcams** – These have become so tiny that several might be taping an instructor’s class without he or she being aware. The output of thousands of webcams around the world are constantly available. Creators of web sites are finding many creative uses for these cameras, from remote data collection to traffic control, exchanging information to leaf watching. See <http://www.earthcam.com/> for a list of examples.

**Wi-Fi** – Short for Wireless Fidelity, Wi-Fi is a fast-growing free-spectrum wireless standard, also known as 802.11 (with various letters). It allows computers and other devices to connect to the Web (and each other) over distances of hundreds of feet and more, without using any wires at all. Many campuses are already partly or completely Wi-Fi enabled, allowing students to access the network from anywhere their computer is located. Locations like cafes, parks, Starbucks, bookstores, and even McDonalds are creating Wi-Fi zones (free or pay) as well. Going around searching for Wi-Fi hotspots is known as “wardriving.” See <http://www.wififreespot.com/>

**Wireless Gaming** – Gaming on cell phones is the fastest growing, most interesting area in the games world. Cell phone games are solo, one-on-one, multiplayer, and massively multiplayer. The small screen, which precludes the complex 3D graphics of console and PC games, has forced developers to think creatively about what can be done with the tools at hand. Among the types of games now found on cell phones are Adventure Games, Board Games, Building Games, Challenge Games, Character Games, Collecting Games, Communications Games, Comparison Games, Connection Games, Cooperative/Assisting Games, Estimation Games, Exploration Games, Flirting Games, Geo-Location Games, Growing and Fighting Games, Guessing Games, Humor Games, Imitation Games, Linking Games, Management Games, Martial Arts Games, Massively Multiplayer Games, Memory Games, Multiplayer Strategy Games, Mystery Games, Numbers Games, Personality Games, Positioning Games, Psychological Games, Puzzles, Recall Games, Resource Management Games, Role Playing Games, Simulations, Soap Opera Games, Speed Games, Spy Games, Story Games, Strategy Games, Team Games, Timed Games, Treasure Hunts, Trivia Games, Truth or Dare Games, Turf Battle Games, Wealth Building Games, and Word Games. There are enormous implications here for education. See <http://www.wirelessgamingreview.com/gamedir/>

*Please feel free to submit additional remedial vocabulary to [marc@games2train.com](mailto:marc@games2train.com)*