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a surreal survey about the effects of nanotechnology on urban game play



With the development of nanotechnology, the world, which had been a fairly smart place up until then, became a very smart place indeed.

All the objects in the world, which meant back then nonorganic, dead things, were given the gift of reason. With the tiniest computers embedded into their little bodies, every shoe, doorbell, street sign and cobblestone as well as just every thing else, was now able to process the information of all the situations it would encounter.

This finally allowed the objects to become active participants of every day life, which the humans were sharing with them happily.

The humans even invented all kinds of different ways to become more closely entangled with these smart objects, either to be even smarter themselves, move more comfortably around, feel more secure, or to be simply more entertained.

For entertainment, smart objects were particularly well suited. Groups of humans who had established big gaming companies were especially delighted to finally expand the world of virtual games into the physical environment of urban spaces. This phenomenon we want to explore a little closer.

Figure 1

Illustration of various objects in the world before the implementation of nanotechnology, with their number and level of personal attachment to humans.



Being provided with the tiniest information processing chips, and networked down to the particles it was constructed of, the physical world had become just as well a virtual world. Offering its inhabitants on the virtual side far more possibilities and intriguing features, game play on the streets became a complete new adventure: children and adult humans were now chasing monsters, find hidden treasures, investigating on mysterious crimes and saving golden beauties. Buildings, walls, street lamps or waste bins would turn into oracles, fairies, and spell zones. There were many worlds within a single city.

Figure 2

Objects can play different roles in games as demonstrated in this exmaple.



Nevertheless, the humans who were the inventors of these games were fighting very real battles, known as "nano-wars", because they wanted to control the best territories of the cities as their exclusive game boards. In order to establish such gaming domains, they were making use of nanoscale robots, called the "bunnybots". The name was given to them for two reasons: they had the ability to replicate unimaginably fast, and they were looking adorably cute.



Figure 3 Bunnybot some billion times enlarged.



Figure 4 Example of a flexible bunnybot mesh.

A bunnybot family could occupy and organize a space in such a way that no alien nanobot could possibly exist within its borders. Their masters were ruling thus over a virtual fortress.

Figure 5

Bunnybot clans controlling the territories of different game companies in a city.



However, none of this was playing any mentionable role in the consciousness of the ordinary, civilian street players. As they were moving through their faster and slower realities, they were raising from death, falling in love, and turning into heros.

Figure 6

Changes in streetlife before (blue) and after (pink) the implementation of nanotechnology.







new personalities per day



quick thinking







hidden treasures

heros per day

evil lords defeated

endangered cretures saved

fast reflexes

new discoveries







super powers

communication with street items



resurrections



street gossip