

MOTIVATION AND SKILL ACQUISITION IN AN ONLINE AMATEUR MULTIMEDIA
COMMUNITY: A CASE STUDY

BY

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DISSERTATION

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Abstract

Both the amount of multimedia content and the venues for sharing such content have steadily increasing, yet much is known about what motivated and helped the content creators to create their artifacts. Using observation, web content analysis, and interviews, this case study focuses on one online amateur multimedia community and the animators therein. In particular, it addresses 1) how one acquires the skills necessary to create animations and participate in the community, and 2) how one acquires the skills necessary to create animations and participate in the community. Having a better understanding of motivation acquisition in this informal, online setting can provide insight on ways to improve and support these learning environments in other online communities, more formal arenas like workplaces, and in other informal settings such as structured after-school programs.

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Preface

The journey to settling on a dissertation topic and a community on which to focus was a meandering one that was influenced by both my background and other external factors. I had little to no control. Perhaps the biggest driver, however, was my fascination with technology that became increasingly more salient in our everyday lives. It was important that I had access to areas and materials with which to learn technical skills. While at elementary school I attended \ U X ' U ' Î Wc where we would do Language Arts and other similar modules on computers when it came to learning actual technical skills, the only offering was a typing class in which I learned how to type and how to use office productivity software such as Microsoft Office Suite. My church also had a handful of computers on which I can remember learning how to ford rivers, but to purchase sewing and other supplies, and typed by playing *The Oregon Trail* and how to multiply and find prime numbers and factors by playing *Number Munchers* after service on Sundays. Had I not gone to boarding school for the eleventh and twelfth grades, however, where I took several computer programming classes, I would not have been exposed to such instruction until going to college. My own experiences have helped me to understand that with the increasing presence of computer technologies in our lives, it is even more important to have access to opportunities and materials to learn technical skills such as coding and to understand how algorithms shape our everyday lives from the search results that we see when we use the the coupons that we are offered at our favorite stores as early as possible.

Thankfully now, there are more opportunities for acquiring technical skills, including opportunities outside of formal classroom and afterschool programs. When looking at these different options, I found it helpful to organize them along two spectrums: structured vs. unstructured and formal vs. informal. Traditional classroom instruction is an example of the formal, structured type; afterschool programs and camps are examples of the informal, structured type; and course

material repositories such as MIT OpenCourseWare are examples of the formal, unstructured bin; and finally, interest-driven online communities are examples of the informal, unstructured bin. The informal, unstructured bin was more interesting to me, and for reasons on the activities in that bin, which suggested to me that it would be a nice research area in which to make contributions. It was also my opinion that of the informal, unstructured learning opportunities, it was the most accessible when it comes to flexibility and diversity of selection. I developed two overarching drivers for this research:

- ◁ To better understand at least one informal learning space (i.e., the types of needs that are met there and cultural norms)
- ◁ To identify practices that could be replicated in the development of either a formal or an informal community or in a more traditional setting

Deciding on a community to study was the next step. (See further on this in the Choosing Cold Hotdog section in Chapter 4.) There are multiple interest-driven online communities that cover just about everything; from writing to knitting to making videos about defecating, there is something for everyone. It was important, however, to find a community that did not overlap too much with topics that are covered in traditional classrooms. That removed communities such as PleasantART (2012), Ravelry (n.d.) and WriteSpace (n.d.) which focus on skills taught in art, home economics, and writing classes. Of the types of communities that remained, the multimedia communities interested me the most as they required the combination of many different skill sets including things that are not taught in schools (e.g., writing and drawing) and those that are not (e.g., music editing and animation). Newgrounds (n.d.) was one such community, but it was quite large with over a million registered users, and there was already great research being conducted there, e.g., (Luther & Bruckman, 2008; Luther, 2012). Animutation Portal (n.d.) was another multimedia community, but again, there was already great

research conducted there (Kendall, 2008a) and the community seemed to be experiencing declines in submissions and traffic when I started observing it. I finally settled on Cold Hotdog (CHD), which was a medium-sized community with active members in a relatively welcoming environment for young content creators. There were several visible demonstrations I witnessed quite early during my observations in the community where members were trading animating tips, offering help in the form of links and advice, and giving advice on submitted content. All of these factors led me to believe that Cold Hotdog would be a great community to study to help me to better understand an informal learning environment.

Finally, after finding a topic and a community, I decided upon two overarching research questions to scope the work:

- < What motivates an individual to move from watching animations to creating the Cold Hotdog?
- < In what way(s) does one acquire the skills necessary to create animations?

To prepare, I attended design critiques and brainstorming sessions at the School of Architecture to better understand what that process might look like in a formal setting that I could compare it to what I would see in Cold Hotdog; I spoke with professors in several departments including Education, Art and Design, and Computer Science to get their opinions on ways to scope and go about my research; and I tinkered with Flash, the software used by many of the members in CHD, so that I could better empathize with the learning curves and frustrations experienced by those individuals. The results of all of these efforts are in the forthcoming pages. I think it was all time and effort well spent.

Chapter 1: Introduction



Figure1. Screenshots of *Time and Space* music video. Captured 22 July 2015 from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s8iAyk6c>
I will include panels with chronological screenshots as this throughout the dissertation to give the reader an idea of the types of videos produced in Cold Hotdog.



Figure2 Screenshots of *Surfers* video. Captured 22 July 2015 from <http://www.newgrounds.com/portal/view/590994>

In some corners of the Internet, videos are the ones from which the screenshots above are more ubiquitous than written text. Individuals create videos and respond to videos in kind. It is even becoming more common to see video in spaces previously devoted solely to text or still images such as the incorporation of short videos of six seconds or less, into Twitter streams, which were initially solely devoted to posts of less than 140 characters (Gibson 2005). With the proliferation of video and other forms of digital media, digital literacy is increasingly important. A reflection of this is Obama Administration's initiative to promote digital literacy training and services to individuals entering and navigating the job market (National Telecommunications and Information Administration 2009).

collectives such as the Digital Media and Learning Research Center, the Games+Learning+Society Center, the Center for the Study of Digital Learning, and the Center for the Study of Digital Learning have emerged with funding from sources such as Microsoft Research, the MacArthur Foundation, and the Gates Foundation. These research collectives examine the use of games, social networking tools, mobile apps, blogs, wikis, photo and video editing software, and physical tools like still and video cameras, smartphones, televisions, and electronic textiles in classrooms and other physical settings such as libraries, community centers, and after-school clubs. These tools and applications are viewed as learning objects as devices used to grab the attention of students and to enhance the learning experience. Nevertheless, not everyone has the opportunity to participate in such programs as all students have similar access to digital technologies (Buchanan, & Friedrich, 2013). What then is one to do when opportunities to learn technical skills are not available in their schools, libraries, or community centers?

One solution is to use structured communities, which have been created to help in instances where opportunities to participate in physical settings are not available. One could learn Computer Science courses through Khan Academy (2012) or Coursera (2012) or learn about writing for the web (e.g., P2P) for example. However, if the courses or topics therein are not appealing or learning in a structured manner, then these options are not opportunities. However, because one sometimes picks up skills while participating in online communities even when that was not the intention (Littia, 2010), one way around this hurdle is to find and participate in an online community.

Online multimedia communities are a type of community in which informal, interest-driven learning can take place. These communities provide a platform for users to submit content, get feedback on submitted content, and talk about and debate content with others with similar interests. The communities vary in focus, size, openness, and formality. For example,

Newgrounds is an interest-driven community with ~1.5 million registered users that allows users to upload Flash videos, Flash games, audio files, and images files (Mayer-Riles, n.d.). Therein, forums and other tools for communication allow members to communicate with one another to trade information about the artifacts in the community, to work together on them. The just chit deviantART community, another interest-driven community, has around 19 million registered users who focus mostly on the creation, editing, and sharing of still images and tutorials contribute video artwork in the form of films (deviantART, 2012). With this difference in size and the types of media that are given precedence, the affordances of these interest-driven communities differ. What is similar though is an emphasis on supporting and producing quality work that is appreciated by many, which demands that members continue practicing improving their craft, whether by writing better story lines, improving their audio/visual mixing skills, or using the correct paint medium.

So, how do participants acquire the skills necessary to participate in these interest communities and what motivates them to pick up these skills? This seeks to understand more about how skill acquisition takes place in one particular online multimedia community as well as the motivations behind learning these skills and participating in such a community.

This study is not without precedent. Jenkins et al. (2006) studied participatory cultures, their significance, and the skills to participate in them, and al. (2010) examined the ways youth participate and engage in online multimedia communities. Others studied open source communities to understand motivation, socialization, and help seeking and giving therein, (Ducheneaut, 2005; Lakhani & Wolf, 2005; Oreg & Nov, 2008; Singh, Twidale, & Rathi, 2006). Yang et al. (2015) studied the learning trajectories of young programmers in the Scratch community, and the gaming community (2006) looked at the motivations for playing massively multiplayer-online role-playing games (MMORPGs) while Nardi et

al. (2007) and Steinkuehler (2004) examined the way in which skills are acquired in MMORPGs. Reeves and Gommon (2015) examined the motivators driving students in a digital design and animation course to participate in formal learning activities. Finally, Freun (2011) and Ito (2010) studied similar concerns in amateur video communities.

The communities in those studies differ from the community under consideration here in focus, size, ways to participate and engage, and demographics. However, the great time commitment, the focus on tools that are not necessarily used, and the need to acquire skills in these communities that one does not typically learn in traditional classroom settings are the things that these communities have in common with the community under consideration. While this study will draw parallels between these communities and the community under consideration, the focus of this study is to look at how and why animators in a particular online amateur multimedia community, Cold Hotdog, come together to form a community to support the acquisition of technology-related skills. The study will address the following research questions:

1. What motivates an individual to move from watching animations to creating them in Cold Hotdog?
2. In what ways do individuals acquire the skills necessary to create animations?

Addressing these concerns in a community like Cold Hotdog in which informal, mostly unstructured learning takes place amongst people of varying ages can inform the support and development of similar communities. It is understood that individuals desire and need technical skills that are not always addressed in formal, or more specifically, (Clark, 2010) classroom settings (Jenkins, 2006) and that initiative, persistence, and engagement differ depending on the context (Boekaerts & Minnaert, 1999). Looking at individuals who are learning in these informal spaces

¹ This is an alias and not the real name of the community.

and looking at an example of such a community can identify the types of needs that are best met in these communities, areas for improvement, and best practices that should be replicated in the development of another community. In this regard, this study extends other work in nontraditional settings including gamification (see, e.g., Yang et al., 2015) and video gaming (Freund, 2011).

Description of Cold Hotdog

Cold Hotdog is an online multimedia community that started in 1990s. By the mid-2000s, it had become one of the more popular multimedia sites on the web with tens of thousands of registered members and over a million hits a day. Since its inception, traffic has varied with an overall downward trend, but traffic tends to drastically increase during special events.

The part of the community with which most members are probably most familiar is the site's homepage, which is owned and administered by the site's founder. The homepage consists of multimedia files submitted by community members as well as work from others in the larger video and animation community. These files are usually accompanied by personal commentary. Clicking on a file showcased on the homepage takes the user to another page where they can view the file content and leave comments. The types of content considered for the site range from Flash videos and games to audio and image files, and their subject matter ranges from educational tutorials on Flash and Photoshop to entertainment parodies of *The Smurfs* or *Pokémon* episodes to original content focusing on feuding fruit or other inanimate objects.

Content is actually chosen to be showcased on the homepage. There are other sites that showcase similar content that have automatic submission systems (e.g., Newgrounds (n.d.) and YouTube (n.d.)), yet the sheer volume of content submitted and hosted

those sites makes it difficult for individual works of art to stand out. Accepted submissions to Cold Hotdog, on the other hand, are posted prominently on the page as popups and are categorized into the appropriate section of the website to aid easy retrieval. Content categories include genres (e.g., audio or games), and names = Z U g i V a] g g] c b] g b c h U WWY d h Y X Z c f h \ Y \ c forums.

As suggested in the last paragraph, to facilitate discussion beyond what is possible on the site, the site also includes functionality that allows users to comment on individual submitted media; they can post in \ Y Wc a a i b] h mÑ g Internet Y b g] j Y Relay Chat (IRC) channels and through pages hosted on other social sites including Facebook, Tumblr, YouTube, and Twitter. While the IRC channels see very little traffic at this point, \ b h \ Y Wc a a i b] h mÑ g `] Z Y WmW` Y ž j] X Y c g U b X c h \ Y for example, have thousands of views.

In the time of this study, Cold Hotdog forums are active with several postings and post viewings each day. Currently, there are five subforums: Flash, the summer carnival, general chat, chat, and archives, and conversations vary widely. They range from general chitchat, science, and gaming to discussions about computers, coding and scripting, and tips on how to become a better developer. The commentary takes many forms: text, to comic strips, to photographs and illustrations that individuals have agreed to make particular (see Figure 3 for an example), and the tone varies from warm exchanges to the (initially, and usually repeatedly, irritating, angering, and trolling) deliberately annoying, and sometimes deceiving, others in an attempt to provoke a response) are more visible in many online arenas (Bakhtin's i ž & \$ % & / ' ?] f a U b ž @] b Y \ U a ž . / @ U k g c b ž & \$ % &

Changes to Cold Hotdog

CHD and its community are significantly different today than they were when I first started actively participating in the fall of 2009. Site traffic and page views continued to decline. The number of posts and animations on the main webpage have declined, and more of the conversations are starting to move to other platforms and social networking sites. Some of these changes have been by design, and others have been the result of technological changes and cultural shifts. The first technological change was in November 2009 when the content submission process switched from using the forum as the submission vehicle to having community members submit content directly to Admin via email. I did not participate in the community much prior to this change, but I can imagine that it may have resulted in fewer videos posted in the forums, which would have reduced engagement with that content by the community members unless the video was chosen by Admin to be featured on the main webpage or a community member chose to post it in the forums anyway.

On the other hand, Admin saw declines in the broader animation community as a whole far back as 2010. When I asked him about declining traffic at CHD,

I think YouTube is the reason for the slight decline in all animation communities.

Not because people can post their animations there, but less people are going to

take the time and effort to create animation compared to the ease of recording

h \ Y a g Y ` j Y g ` h U ` _] b [` c b ` W U a Y f U " ` O Å Q ` H \ Y f Y `] g

and then a larger learning curve in making an animation popular. Now, all

someone has to do to achieve online popularity is have their camera out when

they [sic] cat or baby does something cute. Interaction with an online community

isn't necessary for this.

Then, a server change in 2011 led to a new forum where CHD members had to start new accounts. Some of the individuals who did make the effort to create new accounts and move to the new forum were either unable to or chose not to claim the same username that they had previously used. This led to frustration amongst some, which was expected as usernames function as real names for some users (Bruckman, 2002; Bruckman, Luther, & Fiesler, 2015; Frankel & Siang, 1999) and it also led to many exchanges in which a user would have to make reference to their old username so that other community members would know who they were and they were not in fact a newcomer to the community.

In 2015, The Tourney was moved from the old CHD Facebook page, which changed both the structure, frequency, and the tone of the conversations as fewer forum regulars made the move to the new platform and new participants joined. It was also a challenge to maintain some of the conversations and relationships as the ones maintained on the CHD forums were not always the same on Facebook.

Finally, at the time of this writing in 2016, the CHD forums are totally defunct, and most of the community activities seem to occur on the main webpage and the official webpages on other platforms including Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube.

As in the fan communities in the studies recounted above, this type of assistance that takes place in CHD can be more helpful in enabling learners to figure out what they are trying to achieve and can promote a wider range of creative expressions than is typically found in a traditional classroom setting. As such, I hope that the community can find a way to survive and

Quote from: [redacted] on November 01, 20[redacted] PM

even pieces of entertainment expressly aimed at children can still be smart and well-crafted.



Figure 8 A screenshot of a response in the CHD forums. The annotation on the image contains the v
these changes or at the very least, that the members can find another supportive communi
which they can socialize, create, and share.

Choosing Cold Hotdog

The online ~~and~~ creative community is large yet segmented into communities that
allow for individuals to find groups and support systems that best fit their needs
those center on craft or demographic. For example, one could join a ~~medium sized~~ community like
Craftster with approximately 306,000 members to share crafts (n.d.) or one could do the
same in Etsy, a community of over 1.6 million crafters (n.d.). But these communities are not limited
to crafting, however. Amongst a myriad of other things, one could share recipes on BakeSpace
(n.d.) improve their writing by joining and contributing to (Writers Cafe
with whom one could collaborate through (Kropoz

In initially attempting to examine skill acquisition in informal online settings, I thought
multimedia community would be the best place to start since I assumed that the individuals th

must possess numerous skills in order to be successful. Some of these skills include storytelling, music composition, sound editing and mixing, drawing, character design, design, i.e., the use of imagery, colors, shapes, typography, and animation. What is more, many of these skills are not taught in traditional settings. Removing communities from consideration that center on skills taught in traditional settings removed the various fanfiction communities and communities like Raven (erly) that focus on skills taught in the ever decreasing number of economics classes (Graham, 2013) from consideration. Nevertheless, several communities remained including large communities like Newgrounds (s.d.) and smaller communities like YouTube (s.d.) or Anime Music Videos (s.d.).

Despite the differences in size, the communities that remained had similar structures and affordances when it came to submitting and viewing content, getting feedback on content, otherwise interacting with other members. What did set the communities apart was two and the expectations of the members. The general character or attitude of a community and member expectations for how one should conduct themselves or what to expect in a community are not mutually exclusive, but it is hard to determine at times how they affect one another (will not examine this). Nevertheless, it became apparent that some communities were hostile to newcomers and were not to members who submitted content that others deemed of poor quality. In the communities, newcomers had a hard time getting basic questions answered, and when their questions were answered, the responses tended to be terse. As member expectations are concerned, members in some communities operated on a gift economy much like that in the fan community in which individuals are expected to give, receive, and to reciprocate (Hellekson, 2009). In those communities, members expected to give useful, detailed feedback on submitted content while in others, individuals would submit content so that large numbers of people would see it, regardless of the feedback with the latter

expectations, most of the feedback given would consist of a thumbs down rating or something along a star rating scale. Based on my interactions with individuals in these communities, the number that mattered most was the number of views.

So, taking size, purpose, tone, and member expectations into consideration, I chose Cold Hotdog, which is a once medium-sized, yet now small community that is friendly to newcomers and provides different types of help to its members: advice on art and story direction to simple tips of how to better use Flash or write tighter ActionScript. Its smallish size made it a little easier to get acquainted with the community and its members, but more importantly, the openness and willingness of the members to help others made the community a natural place to study motivation and to observe skill acquisition in many different ways.

Adobe Flash

Because many of the Cold Hotdog members use Flash to create videos and games, appropriate at this point to explain Adobe Flash (formerly called Macromedia Flash and Shockwave Flash) Flash for this is a software tool that helps produce animations, graphics, games, and applications for the desktop, Internet, and mobile. Acquired by Adobe in 2005 from Macromedia (Adobe, n.d.) and recently rebranded as Adobe Animate, content created with Flash reaches over one billion devices worldwide (Adobe, 2016). Professional animators and hobbyists alike use Flash because of its ubiquity and its ability to create polished, complete products.

Nevertheless, Flash has a steep learning curve, especially for creating animations. The tool is not altogether intuitive or user-friendly. Figure 4 is a screenshot of the Flash workspace. The stage takes up the most space in the workspace, which is seen in Figure 4, completely empty. The stage is where all content for the resulting video, application, or graphic is placed.

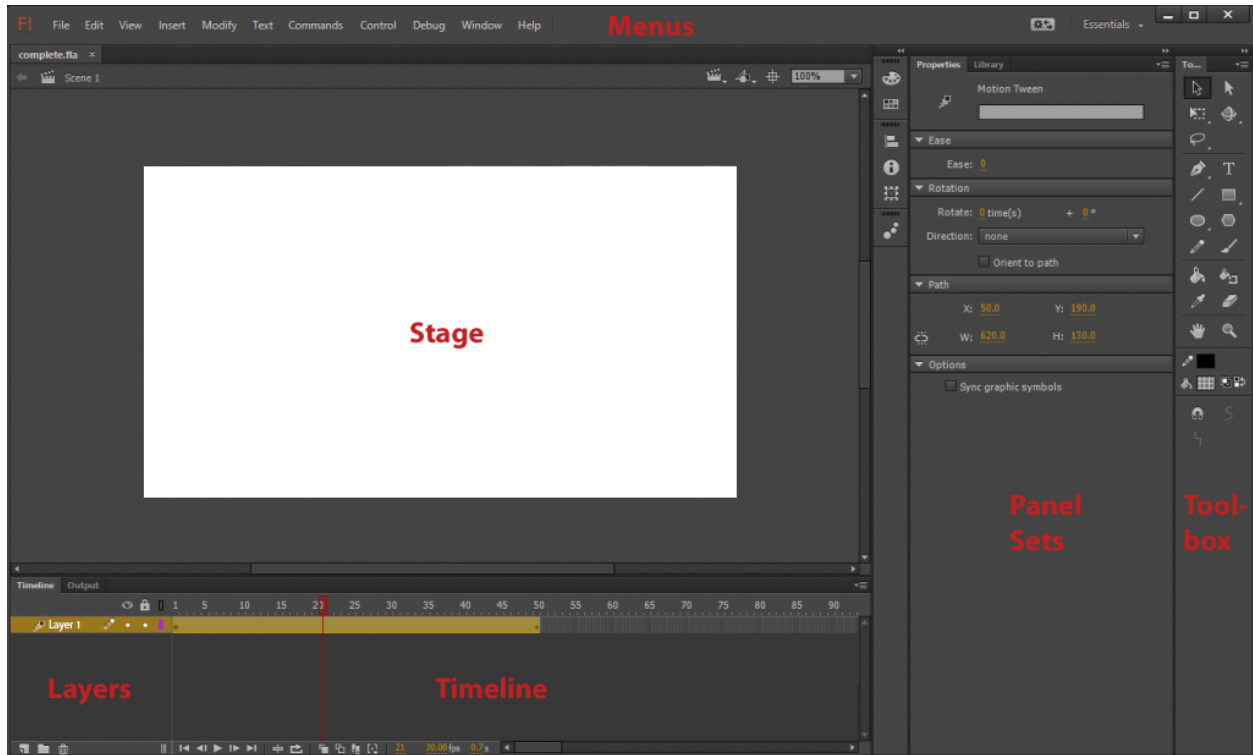


Figure 4. An annotated screenshot of the Adobe Animate CC workspace.

The menu, toolbox, panel sets, and layers should be recognizable to individuals familiar with tools in the Adobe Creative Suite (i.e., Dreamweaver, Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, Flash, and Fireworks). The menu allows for the standard actions in most software tools such as editing, and closing a file. The toolbox includes tools for drawing and other common actions, yet the panel sets provide a multitude of grouping options including seeing the editing history of the open document, properties of the content on the stage, and layers are like stacked transparent sheets of paper. One can create as many layers as desired and can then place content on a layer and move it without disturbing the other layers (unless one creates a group of layers which can then be moved together). They do not have to remain transparent, however, as the opacity can be changed.

The timeline on the other hand is one of Flash's Z that is not shared with all of the other Adobe tools. This timeline is where the animator controls the speed at which movements

occur in the animation, when things enter or exit the scene, and the position of elements in relation to other elements in the scene. The speed is measured in frames which are signified by the small, vertical boxes in the timeline, and they can contain multiple layers and effects. The faster an animation occurs, the closer together the content changes in the timeline. To create a slower animation, the animator includes more frames in between content changes (or they slow down the frame rate, which is the number of frames that occur each second).

The last important thing to note about Flash is ActionScript, an object-oriented programming language that developers use to create elements that can be assigned to elements within their Flash projects. ActionScript can be used for any number of reasons within a Flash creation including moving objects, creating a button, or changing the color of elements on the stage. For an example, here is a segment of ActionScript that creates a button:

```
package
{
    import flash.display.Sprite;
    import flash.events.Event;
    import flash.display.Graphics;

    public class Main extends Sprite
    {
        private var button:Sprite;

        public function Main():void
        {
            //Create a new instance of a Sprite to act as the button
            button = new Sprite();

            //Set the color of the button to mustard yellow
            button.graphics.beginFill(0xFFCC00);

            //Draw a button and set its X, Y (stage position), Width, and Height
            button.graphics.drawRect(0, 0, 200, 200);

            //Apply the color to the new button
            button.graphics.endFill();

            //Add Button to the stage
            this.addChild(button);
        }
    }
}
```

All of the lines that begin with // denote a comment that helps explain what the subsequent code does in the code. An animator can add ActionScript code such as the above to a film clip creation in the Action panel, which is one of the many panels that appear in the panels portion of the workspace. Figure 4

Chapter 2: What Do You Mean by Learning?

The two overarching research questions for this case study address skill acquisition and motivation. While large bodies of work address both of those areas, the ensuing sections will review the most relevant prior scholarship and the definitions that I have chosen to adopt.

Learning

Up to this point, I have intentionally tried to avoid stating the focus of this study. Every person reading this has learned something. They learned the letters in the modern English alphabet, the words made up of those letters, and the meaning behind those words (or, at least, how to look up the meaning of those words). Ask just about any person outside of the Education how to define learning, however, and despite their experience with learning, coming with a definition proves difficult. Learning has been generally described in two ways: as a product and as a process (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007; Smith, 2003). When thought of as a product, learning describes a change in behavior. On the other hand, when thought of as a process, learning describes the procedure by which behavior changes whether the learning is intentional or not. Here, I will primarily focus on learning or acquiring skills as a process. Below I describe four paradigms or orientations of learning theories that attempt to explain how and why learning takes place when it is described as a process: behaviorist, humanist, constructivist, and cognitivist (Merriam et al., 2007). The ensuing sections, I will describe other theories and concepts that lean heavily on these orientations that have greatly informed this case study of Cold H

Five Learning Orientations

While there is no consensus on how many learning theories there are or how to best group them into categories, here we focus on five orientations that provide different views on learning and that have gained traction in the learning community: behaviorist, humanist, constructivist, cognitivist, and social cognitivist. These orientations are not mutually exclusive, and some (1952) theory on the cognitive development of children is considered useful by both cognitivist and constructivists.

To begin, behaviorism is an orientation to learning developed in the early twentieth century under which three assumptions are held to be true: learning is manifested by a change in behavior, environment shapes behavior, and the principles of contiguity and reinforcement are central to explaining the learning process (Merriam et al., 2007; Smith, 2003). Behaviorism is used to design and foster an environment that brings forth certain behaviors that can be measured and tracked. As such, this orientation to learning is one that is widely used in assessment initiatives in the United States including No Child Left Behind (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.) and Race to the Top (U.S. Department of Education, 2013).

Humanists, on the other hand, do not believe that behavior can be predetermined by the environment (Merriam et al., 2007). Humanists believe that affective and cognitive needs are more important and that learners have the freedom and responsibility to become all that they are capable of becoming. Motivation is intrinsic, and the purpose of learning is to become self-autonomous, complete individuals (Merriam et al., 2007; Smith, 2003). Some of the research and advice on heutagogy (self-determined learning), andragogy (adult learning), and telecollaborative learning leans on humanist learning theories (Asmutz, 1999; Blaschke, 2012; Martin, 2009; Merriam et al., 2007).

Like behaviorists, constructivists believe that the environment is important to learning. Constructivists posit that meaning is imposed on the world by learners instead of the other around and that there are many meanings and perspectives even for any given concept. In this regard, the ability to understand and use the information (Duffy & Jonassen, 1992; Merriam et al., 2007). While the theorists with this orientation agree on the basic assumption of disagreement on how big a role experience plays, what knowledge is of interest, the nature and whether or not the process of meaning making is an individual (Verschaffel et al., 2007). Nevertheless, many theories and models of learning are placed under the constructivist umbrella including social development (Vygotsky, 1978), situated activity (Suchman, 1987), activity theory (By A. Nardi, 1996), cognitive apprenticeships (Collins, Brown, & Newman, 1989; Tilley, 2001), situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and communities of practice (Wenger, 2006).

Constructionism is largely associated with constructivism. While constructivists and constructionists both equate learning with building knowledge structures, constructionists do not believe that constructing a physical entity is necessary for learning to take place.

Unlike behaviorists and constructivists who tend to focus on the environment, cognitive theorists (Merriam et al., 2007; Smith, 2003) argue that in structuring the information to be learned, the content of the information are all essential to learning. Therefore, the role of the instructor would be to structure the content of the learning activity to aid the learner as he or she focuses

Piaget's theory on the cognitive development of children is one of the seminal cognitivist theories. His suggestion that children develop a mental image of how something works and then experience whether that image is accurate by testing it against reality is the opposite of some constructivist principles, who believe that experience comes before the development of a mental image.

Finally social cognitivism combines aspects of behaviorism and cognitivism and is simply a conjecture that people learn by observing others (Merriam et al., 2007). Such learning takes place in social situations in which individuals acquire knowledge about a myriad of things including rules concerning appropriate behaviors, attitudes, strategies, beliefs, and languages. Individuals learn by observing, by imitating what they see, or by modeling different outcomes and consequences (Bandura, 1977, 1986; Merriam et al., 2007). Behaviorists believe that the environment shapes the learner, social cognitivism subscribes to social determinism, which as described by Bandura (1977, 1986) is a view that cognitive, behavioral, and environmental factors all influence one another. As such, one cannot focus solely on the environment or mental processes. Encouraging the learners to do the same.

Situated Learning

One of the theories that falls under the constructivist orientation described above that deserves further attention is situated learning. Situated learning is a learning theory or model that contends that learning is a social activity rather than a psychological activity. According to this theory, learning is situated in a legitimate activity and culture, through a process called legitimate peripheral participation, which concerns the process by which individuals become a part of a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In short, one gains knowledge by doing as opposed to receiving.

| Activity | Example |
|---|---|
| <i>Problem solving</i> | "Can we work on getting this converted to a more user-friendly format?" |
| <i>Requests for information</i> | "Where can I find a DVR to record shows?" |
| <i>Seeking experience</i> | "Has anyone dealt with Comcast customer service before in this situation?" |
| <i>Reusing assets</i> | "I have a proposal for a new column I did last year. I can send it to you and you can easily tweak it." |
| <i>Coordination and synergy</i> | "Can we combine our DVD collections so that we can all watch and analyze the series together?" |
| <i>Discussing developments</i> | "What do you think of the new season of <i>Friday Night Lights</i> ? Do you think the writing this season is as good as in previous seasons?" |
| <i>Documentation projects</i> | "We have faced this problem five times. Let us write it down once and for all." |
| <i>Visits</i> | "Can we come and watch your big screen? We need to find a place that has enough room to seat all of us so that we can write a critique together." |
| <i>Mapping knowledge and identifying gaps</i> | "Who knows what, and what are we missing? What other groups should we connect with?" |

Table 1. Examples of ways that CoP members can develop their practice. The examples are statements that could be heard in a CoP consisting of television critics.

actions that one undertakes performed under the purview of others who have varying levels of expertise with the hope that the skills that one acquires are on the periphery of the CoP towards full participation.

Communities of practice refer to a group of people who are committed to learning something they do and learn how to do it better (Wenger, 2006, para. 4). They can be any size, membership can change, they can last for varying durations, and they do not have to be intentional nor does it have to occur in a formal setting like a school or an organizational workshop. CoPs have three components or characteristics that define them: 1) domain a shared sphere of interest, 2) community members interacting and engaging in shared activities and discussions, and 3) participating in activities and developing a shared collection of resources (Wenger, 2006). For example, the community of practice for the Old Hotdog, the community

under study, has the components of CoPs. Of the individuals there are interested in artifacts created with the Flash software, they work together making, sharing, and critique community created artifacts they share and compile resources to assist in their artifacts.

In addition to involving action, the situated learning process also involves cultivating identity. As one performs tasks of increasing difficulty and responsibility, in some cases the changing knowledge, skill, and discourse help to define one's identity as a member of a CoP. This idea of membership in a CoP is one source of motivation on the part of an individual as is the growing use value of participation (Wenger, 1998). Identity cultivation is also evident in Cold Hotdog. As participants increase their level of engagement in the community, they acknowledge those community members who have helped them increase their skills by mentioning their names in forum posts whether that assistance was given through the supplying of tutorials and code snippets. They also demonstrate their increasing ability to assist others, by talking about the ways in which they are or have acquired their skills, and begin to separate themselves from other community members by calling attention to newer community members who fail to adhere to community norms. Neither the application of the concept of a CoP to an online community nor the observing of identity cultivation therein is unique to this study. Davies (2006) for example, also notes identity formation practices in her examination of teenagers in two online communities that have been observed in Cold Hotdog, and Reeves and Galletta (2015) interrogate the use of CoP theory as applied to a community that included design and architecture students of West Midlands University.

As noted earlier, situated learning asserts that learning occurs through legitimate peripheral participation. An important thing to note about legitimate peripheral participation is that it does not require participants to be collocated in order to learn from one another. They can be, as are all

individuals in the examples recounted by Lave and Wenger (1991) (e.g., midwives, tailors, quartermasters, meat cutters, and nondrinking alcoholics), however, none of the facets of legitimate peripheral participation process or the defining characteristics of CoPs require collocation. What is necessary, however, is communication between members of the CoP.

Members of CoPs must share and engage with one another, and interactions, as they become more involved in the group and are then able to help and motivate newer members. If collocation is not possible, then the use of information and communication technologies can be utilized to help make these interactions possible. Simply communicating, however, is not sufficient. The ICs should also have affordances that allow members to share information in various ways (e.g., verbally or in text) and forms (e.g., Word docs or audio/visual files). They necessarily help members to better share context and to engage in some of the activities mentioned in Table 1 like reusing assets and problem solving. Cold Hotdog utilizes several different tools in order to communicate with one another including email and forum postings.

Distance Education

Because I mentioned that collocation is not necessary when participating in a community of practice, perhaps I should quickly address distance education and how it compares to what I observed in Cold Hotdog. While some conflate distance and online education, distance education as a practice has in fact predated the World Wide Web and even computers. Depending on how one defines distance education, one could say that distance education dates back to centuries ago when early explorers delivered information by word of mouth about the places and people they had encountered on their travels, or one could instead date distance education to the 1800s when correspondence courses first appeared (Brewer & Brown, 1994; Simonson, Smaldino, Albright, & Zvacek, 2000). For example, an advertisement in a Swedish newspaper in 1833 publicized the opportunity to

Pitman to offer shorthand instruction via correspondence (Simons, 1840, 2000) it appears that people have been learning across physical distances for quite some time.

Because distance education has manifested in many different places in different configurations, it is perhaps with little surprise that one finds that distance education also definitions or been attributed several different characteristics. Scholars have disagreed different time or at a different place or both? Dan Coldeway came up with a framework that frame four ways in which education can be practiced which may help us make more sense of the questions. His framework combined time and place in four ways: same time, different place; different time, same place; and different time, different place (Simonson, Smaldino, Albright, & Zvacek, 2000). Traditional education would usually fit in the same time, same place quadrant. Now, with the use of technology, different incarnations of distance education can any of the other three quadrants. At least that is what some scholars would say, yet others that in order to be considered distance education, it must solely fit into the different time, different place quadrant.

Another definition posed by Simons (2000) defines distance education as institution-based, formal education where the learning group is separated geographically and via interactive telecommunications systems are used to connect learners and instructors. With this definition, their view of distance education could fit into either the different time, different place or the same time, different place quadrant as long as the instruction were formal and tied to an institution. Technology also has a strong presence in their definition. This focus on instruction tied to an institution using technology is the view most readily found when survey current research on distance education.

Regardless of which one of the aforementioned ways is defined as distance education, many educational opportunities are now offered via the Web where students have opportunity to learn either informally or formally through programs offered by universities. The British Open University (founded in 1971), Fern Universitat of Germany (founded in 1975), and the University of Twente in the Netherlands are some of the leading providers of online courses in Europe while in the US, the American Open University, Nova Southeastern University, and the University of Phoenix are some of the leaders in providing distance education (Simone, 2000a).

There are also traditional, physical schools that offer courses, or even entire degrees, such as the Wabash University in Indiana and the University of the Pacific in California. Not only is distance education employed at the collegiate level, but in the United States there is also a focus on utilizing distance education at primary and secondary schools. Prior to 1987, there were less than ten states engaged in distance education. Today, however, most states have education programs at institution, system, and state levels with about 45 states sharing distance education programming across state borders (Brown & Brown, 1994).

Because there are several different ways to participate in distance education, the people who do participate are quite varied. Learners include primary, secondary, and collegiate students; students; and adult learners (Therfield & Brzoska, 1994). In these varied audiences, there are of course a variety of reasons to enroll (when it is not compulsory) including convenience and flexibility, lack of instructional alternatives, and the fact that distance education can serve as an educational mainstream alternative (Therfield & Brzoska, 1994). A study noted by Pappas (2003) of respiratory therapists provided similar reasons for enrolling in Web-based education with their top eight motivations including things like being able to fit courses into their schedule better than regularly scheduled classes, the ability to learn at any hour of the day, eliminating the

travel, being able to start a course whenever they found convenient, learn at a convenient location, saving time, being able to take a course that was not available in their area, saving money. So, there seem to be quite a few reasons that people find distance education appealing. These are similar to some of the motivators expressed by Cold Hotdog participants especially the lack of instructional alternatives and convenience.

Despite all of the positive reasons for utilizing distance education, there are a few things that concern and/or deter students from taking part in distance education. One of the major concerns is the perception of distance education as moving increasingly (Purdue, 2003; Valentine, 2002) towards a perception of poor instruction overall quality, hidden costs, misuse of technology, possible negative or lackluster attitudes of instructors, students, administrators; family constraints; lack of benefit or relevance; poor feedback, engagement; lack of confidence; work constraints; a preference for face-to-face communication; a preference for using printed materials over electronic materials; lack of adequate communication connectivity. Poor feedback and lack of confidence came up a bit in my interviews with Cold Hotdog participants as well. Some of these concerns cannot be addressed or mediated by a distance education provider (e.g., family or work constraints). However, some of the others could be mediated by properly preparing instructors to work in an online, or otherwise distant, environment; helping the instructor to understand the needs of the students; understanding the target population so that their needs can be better met; providing access to site support for instructors; providing timely feedback to students; and providing access to library materials to students (Tinkeld & Brzoska, 1994; Valentine, 2002). An environment like Cold Hotdog in which instruction is less formal, community norms could help address some of these issues.

Taking into account all of the motivators and deterrents to distance education, there do seem to be a certain type of student that is likely to be successful when undertaking courses

distance (or participating in something less formal like an online discussion) have a tendency to have a tolerance for ambiguity, a need for autonomy, and an ability to be flexible. Students that are likely to have trouble tend to need a good deal of reinforcement, need goals defined for them, prefer a great deal of structure, and need opportunities to interact face-to-face with instructors (Trankeld & Brzoska, 1994). It is important to note, however, that as technology improves, some of these barriers could be lessened (e.g., video chat could be used to aid the need for face-to-face interaction) so that more students with different types of learning styles could be able to more successfully part in distance education. Some of the Cold Hotdog members with which I spoke mentioned ways that they attempted to get around some of these barriers such as emailing one another and sketching or sending screen captures of things that they wanted to discuss with others.

E-learning

As most of the communication and interactions amongst Cold Hotdog members takes place via some computerized device, it would be appropriate to mention not just learning but e-learning as well. A conflation of the words e-learning, the definition of learning or online learning has not been readily agreed upon. One popular definition is one put forth by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (2005) which defines e-learning as any learning that uses ICTs which includes flexible learning, distance learning, and the use of an ICT as a communications and delivery tool between individuals and groups to support students and improve the management of learning. Keengwe and Kibira (2010) provide a similar, but perhaps broader, definition that includes the delivery of course content via all electronic media in the Internet, intranets, extranets, satellite broadcasts, audio/video tapes, interactive televisions, and compact discs.

The definition with which I am most comfortable, however, is proposed by Caroline Haythornthwaite who defines e-learning as "the use of technology to facilitate learning and building knowledge on and

through networked information and communication technologies, maximizing the benefits of
V m' Wc b h Y a d c f U f m' h Y W \ b c ` c [m' h c ' Wc (2013, p. 57)] h \ '] b
This does not mean that learning is simply technology-enabled learning, but it should be viewed
as an inextricably social process whereby learning and technology have evolved a mutually co-
relationship. This type of learning is often referred to as "social learning" (Hatch, 2002, p. 10).
by the learner to result in personal, social and/or political change, with the added dimension
U g ' k Y ` ` ' U g ' h Y U W \ Y f ' X] g W i g g] c (Haythornthwaite & c b c i g ` m
Andrews, 2011, p. 60). Their view, practices of communication, group behavior, and community
emerge at the intersection of social and technical practices should also be viewed as
individuals at the center of a social and selected network of resources and learners, and
they should be agile or willing to take on the role of either the learner or the teacher,
2013) This model of learning, especially since it avoids necessitating the presence of a formal
institution, helps frame the learning activities that take place in the Cold Hotdog community.
Individuals move between teaching simple Flash skills to taking feedback on their own
work from others. They pick and choose the types of activities in which they engage, also to
whom they listen. They also pick and choose forms of technology to utilize in order to best
accomplish their goals at any given time. When something cannot be easily conducted in the forums
for example, they move to other platforms or mediums such as email or phone.

Informal Learning

One draw to learning and interacting in online communities like Cold Hotdog is that
learning therein can be less structured and more informal. The learning can be informal. Just as there
is disagreement concerning the definition of learning, there is also disagreement about the
definition of informal learning. This concept of informal learning has been discussed in several

different ways, e.g. (Beekaerts & Minnaert, 1999; Drotner, 2008; Livingstone, 2001; Sefton 2008; Werquin, 2010). Nevertheless, there do seem to be some overlapping concepts.

In a review of literature, Sefton finds four key elements to discussions of informal learning: 1) location (i.e., where the learning takes place), 2) processes (i.e., how the learning is organized, supported, and structured), 3) purposes (i.e., reasons the learning occurs), and 4) content (i.e., the type of material being learned and its usefulness) (Sefton, 2008, pp. 240). Werquin (2010) defines three types of learning: formal learning, informal learning, and non-formal learning distinguished by the learning contexts, learning outcomes, and recognition that learning has taken place. In her examination, however, Drotner (2008) finds only two elements that stand out in discussions of informal learning: the extent to which the learning is structured and/or planned and the extent to which the learner identifies the activities that are taking place as learning activities.

Taking into account how Sefton (2008), Werquin (2010), and Drotner (2008) categorizations collapse onto one another, I adopt a simple definition of informal learning put forth by Livingstone (2001, p. 4): "the acquisition of understanding, knowledge or skill from any source other than formal education, which is not organized, supported, and structured by an institution, and which is not subject to imposed curricular criteria." This definition appears to skirt the issue of location, it does not say that it must occur outside of academic institutions as some definitions do, but it does not say that it must occur in a non-formal setting either. The main type of organization or structure, which is the process element that we expect. Purpose is also addressed in the definition as is content. The only qualm may be that this definition is broad and includes formal learning and informal learning categories. The differences between formal and informal

learning as defined by We (2010) that formal learning is typically intentional and structured (or includes some structured elements) while informal learning is unintentional and unstructured. The definition that I have chosen put forth by (2010) attempts to split the difference by implying that some aspects of informal learning are intentional while not addressing the issue of structure.

Examining the definition of informal learning makes it clear that informal learning can and does occur in most, if not all, online communities created by educational institutions. It also does not appear to be at odds with the definition that the previous section for learning. Nevertheless, when one sees a reference to an online, informal learning community in most studies, the focus is usually on sites such as (Why? Serfati, Yang et al., 2015) that are explicitly created so that people could learn and create things together to hobbyist or leisure sites such as (Vaidy) where people converse and share information about a common interest. (Henderson, 2015) suggest that studies of online informal and non-formal learning are severely outpaced by the number of studies focused on face-to-face instruction. But even when focused on online informal learning, most prior research has looked at online, informal knowledge-based learning communities as opposed to online, informal practice-based learning communities as defined by (Rie, 2004). (Hick, Y. I., W. Y., d. h., J., c. b., g., U. f., Y., (2014), h. i., X. m., c. Z., U. b., c. b., J., b. Y., \,] _] b [(2013) study of "It's My Turn" self-help communities. This study of Cold Hotdog adds to this small, but growing body of work.

Participation Frameworks

Taking into account all of the previous sections on learning orientations and specific types of learning, understanding or explaining comes down to exploring what people are doing, what they are saying, and how that may or may not have changed from a previous point in time and

g d U WY " ' = b ' g \ c f h ž ' i b X Y f g h U b X] b [' c b Y Ñ g ' ginyW] U ` ' U
(Vadeboncoeur, 2006) one way to do that is by examining the context of the learner.

The conditions under which Cold Hotdog community members are engaging and operating are much different from that in a formal classroom environment. That environment or context is what makes the community unique and attractive to some of its members. Under this context including its members, their relationships, and what is necessary in order to fully understand the actions that are undertaken therein. In understanding the context, it will become apparent how the community members define success and what counts as learning space. One way to identify and describe a context for learning is with a participation framework.

Erving Goffman (1981) is one of the first to describe participation frameworks through the significance of different interactional configurations and the different ways that one could happen to be in a perceptual range of the event, or a sort of participation status relative to others (1981, p. 3). During those events, the positions of all of those present and the expectations of appropriate conduct in those positions are all relevant for analysis. While this description serves to view frameworks as a structure and guide for activity, the view, in turn, serves as a structure for activities themselves where conduct changes or responds to what the environment allows (Rae, 2001). In frameworks viewed in this manner, individuals are seen as participating in a way that is shaped by the environment (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1992, p. 97).

Herein, I utilize the general participation framework as described by (2006) that provides a way to study the ways in which contexts for learning are structured and shaped for learners across space and time. This framework is grounded in sociocultural theory or the notion that learning is realized through participation in everyday social practices (this most directly

correlates with the constructivist orientation discussed earlier) and that human action is socially, culturally, and historically situated (Vasquez, 2006; Wertsch, 1991). Much of the work on learning with ties to the sociocultural approach, situated learning and communities of practice, builds off of the ideas and research of (Vygotsky, 1978) his notion that mental functioning in the individual is derived from social life. Understanding the environment of the learner is important, which is another reason I have adopted this framework provides scaffolding for studying the features of a context as well as the relationships between those features. Five a context that I will use in the analysis of Cold Hotdog that (Vadeboncoeur, 2006) identifies include

- ◁ Location: what is the location, and how is it organized? (covered in Chapter 1)
- ◁ Relationships: how do the relationships develop, and what roles and responsibilities are obtained? (Chapters 4 and 6)
- ◁ Content: what is the content, who has access to this disciplinary? (Chapters 1 and 5)
- ◁ Pedagogy: how is the pedagogy organized, and what do teachers and learners do? (Chapters 4 and 5)
- ◁ Assessment: how is assessment conducted, and what are assessments taken to mean? (Chapters 6 and 7)

While Vadeboncoeur developed her framework with evaluating informal school and non-school contexts in mind, the flexibility of its definition makes it applicable to all learning contexts. It makes it easy to compare the similarities and differences across different learning contexts for the framework is not without challenges, however. Gees (2013) puts forth two challenges. First, should one use ideas about learning to describe and analyze what one observes or should one use what he or she observes to describe and analyze ideas about learning? Secondly, how does one characterize intrapersonal and inter-personal learning? The first challenge that affects a great deal of research on learning. A lot of the nomenclature and understandings drawn from research

formal, and more specifically traditional classroom environments are used when exploring not school environments as well when there is not a clear parallel. Doing so brings presuppositions to those school environments that may or may not be accurate. I think that (Sexton & Green, 2003, p. 34) but one way to address this first challenge is by using the words and practices of the learners to speak for themselves. That is what I have tried to do in this study.

The second challenge deals with the inherent difficulty of capturing and describing aspects of identity in the intrapersonal aspects of participation with which they would be important to those who describe learning in cognitivist terms, for example, the sociocultural underpinning the general participation framework as described by (Vygotsky, 1978) but not our place as much emphasis is on the inner workings of individuals. The emphasis is more on interpersonal relationships, which are indeed much easier to capture and describe by others. Nevertheless, there are researchers who do focus on both the intrapersonal area including Milbrey W. McLaughlin (1999) and Barton Hirs (2005) have not attempted to do that here.

Motivation

Psychologists define motivation as purposeful behavior that is ultimately directed toward (Zimbardo & Maslow, 1967) [Zimbardo & Maslow, 1967] [Bernard, Wilks, Swenson, & Walsh, 2005] Motivational theory is usually grounded in an understanding of basic human needs including physiological needs (e.g., satisfying hunger and safety needs, love needs, esteem needs (e.g., having strength, independence, prestige, or recognition) or self-actualization (e.g., doing what one is fit for) (Maslow, 1943) These needs are built upon one another such that one must first satisfy their physiological needs satisfying their safety needs and so on.

In this case study, do not attempt to break down motivation into these base needs, rather I focus on motivation in terms of the goals and motivators specifically of participants in online communities including Wikipedia, online gaming, the open source community, and the online vidding

Wikipedia

Because Wikipedia articles are so ubiquitous as to appear near the top of results returned by many search queries, many do not realize that the community consists of much more than the articles and that there is a large, active community of Wikipedians that work to make the encyclopedia the artifact that Wikipedia contributors range in contribution level with some people having made small, grammatical changes to one or two articles to those who have spent years and/or completely written several articles. Users can choose to edit articles without creating an account, or they can make changes after registering. One way that these users communicate with one another within the site is through the use of Talk pages. Each page has a talk page attached to it where one can see and contribute to the different discussions that have taken place with regards to that article and its content. Simply taking a cursory glance at some of these pages, one can see that some of these discussions can be quite lengthy and involved. Sometimes even edits about quite pleasant topics like chocolate can become quite contentious (Viegas, Wattenberg, & Dave, 2004). Why do people spend time doing this? Why do they take the time to look up information, write it, and then, sometimes, defend when it comes under question by others?

Yang and La (2010) found that knowledge sharing in the English version of Wikipedia is positively associated with internal self motivation or the force that drives individuals to pursue an activity that meets their inherent standards. When individuals' behaviors meet their internal standards and then receive positive feedback from performing the behavior, they feel confident in their competence (Bandura, 1987). This suggests that it is important to Wikipedia

contributors to enjoy and have pride in their work and to receive feedback for their work.

In a survey of multiple studies, however, Rafaeli (2008) identified multiple additional motivators for Wikipedia contributors: ideology, cognitive motivators (e.g., the opportunity to learn), affective motivators (e.g., pleasure), and integrative motivators (e.g., working with others). Rafaeli and Ariel found discrepancies. For example, one study found integrative motivators were strong motivators while another did not. They note that the differences could be due to the number of Wikipedia contributors and the use of different samples. Nevertheless, all of these motivators, with the exception of ideology, were found in the CHD community.

Online Gaming

The online gaming umbrella covers many different communities and games from casual games like *Candy Crush* (2015) to multiuser dungeons (MUDs) to massively multiplayer online role playing games (MMORPGs) such as *World of Warcraft* (2011). The motivators for participation in MUDs and MMORPGs are most like those of the CHD participants. In one of the earlier studies of MUD users, Bar (1996) found four motivations for participation: achievement within the game context, exploration of the game, socializing with others, and imposition on others. While many users were motivated primarily by one of these motivations of course some overlap depending upon the game. Achievement was a motivator of CHD members, and while socializing in and of itself was not an over motivation, a few of the CHD motivators were dependent on others, such as helping and getting feedback.

In subsequent studies of MMORPG users, however, researchers have identified five user motivations: achievement (i.e., desiring to become powerful in the context of the virtual environment through the achievement of goals and accumulation of items, that confer power

relationship (i.e., desiring to interact with others and being willing to form relationships that are supportive in nature), achievement (i.e., enjoying competing, achieving, and dominating others), escapism (i.e., using the virtual world to temporarily avoid, forget about, and escape from real-life stress and problems), and manipulation (i.e., enjoying deceiving, scamming, taunting, and dominating others). The achievement, relationship, manipulation, and immersion motivators are similar to the motivators found by Yee (2006). MUDs are considered the textual predecessors of MMORPGs, so this overlap is not surprising. However, the escapism motivator was not shared with the MUD community nor did I find it in the CHD community. Additionally, as I encountered very few female users who explicitly presented themselves in the CHD community, Yee (2006) was able to find that males were more likely to be driven by the achievement and manipulation factors while females were driven by the relationship factor.

Open Source Communities

Other research on motivation applies to this study conducted on open source communities (Hertel, Niedner, & Herrmann, 2003; Lakhani & Wolf, 2005; Oreg. & Nov, 2008). Open source software development in these communities can be thought of as the process of producing software based on unimposed success both the developers and the resulting source code (Bonaccorsi & Rossi, 2003) and No (2008) administered web-based surveys to members of an open source project and found that the software contributors placed a reputation-gaining and self-development motivations while the content contributors placed an emphasis on altruistic motives for their help. Despite seeing lots of individuals providing help in the CHD forums and talking to a few interviewees that show much they enjoyed giving advice to less experienced animators, none of the motivators that I found in Cold Hotdog were purely altruistic.

In a study of the Linux community, Her (2005) found that contributors were motivated by general identification as well as specific identification as a Linux developer or career advantages, oriented motives related to reactions of relevant others (e.g., family, friends or colleagues), social and political motives related to supporting independent software and networking with the Linux community, hedonistic motives such as pure enjoyment of programming and the discounting of motivational obstacles that they faced that the Linux-related activities were a waste of time. Interestingly, the Linux community has become networking or socializing motivator with the MMORPG community. In the skill improvement, reactions of others, and enjoyment with the CHD community. The career advantage motivator is also a motivator in CHD for continuing, as opposed to starting, to animate.

Finally, Lakhani and Wood (2005) found that enjoyment, user need, intellectual stimulation, and improving programming skills were top motivators among survey respondents in an open source community. All of these, save for the user need motivator, are important inspirations in the Cold Hotdog community.

Online Vidding

Lastly, the online vidding community is probably the closest of these communities to the animating community in terms of necessary skill and end product. Vidding is a form of filmmaking in which clips from television shows, movies, and other media are cut, assembled, and set to music (Coppa, 2008). The vidding community is predominantly female and traces its origin to the *Star Trek* television show where early vidders would make fan videos by editing, and adding to film pieces (Coppa, 2008; Freund, 2011). Participating in the community demands technical knowledge concerning how to edit music and video, storyboarding skills, and a popular

culture familiarity tends to serve as a buffer against criticisms of representations (Comas-Forgas, 2008; Turk & Johnson, 2012)

In her study of vidders, Frith (2011) found that vidders were motivated by their passion for the source material and desires to tell their own story (oftentimes to make statements on larger issues relating to women and minorities), to entertain, and to respond to art and culture. The motivation to express oneself was also found in CHD, and while not explicitly expressed, the desire to entertain was also some CHD animators discussed the difficulty of catering to both the audience and the judges during competitions in CHD. At least one of my interviewees consciously chose to make animations catered more to the audience than to the judging panel.

Chapter 3: Constructing a Case Study of an Online Amateur Multimedia Community

As previously noted, this case study focuses on an online amateur multimedia community, Cold Hotdog, and the individuals therein. Using interviews, participant observation, and web content analysis (X X f Y g g ' e i Y g h] c b g ' Wc b WY f create [animations b Y Ñ g ' such a community,2) how one acquires the skills necessary to create animations and participate in the community.

Data Collection and Sampling

To attempt to answer the questions above, I conducted an instrumental case study, or a case study in which the case itself is secondary to particular phenomena and the relationships therein, and the focus is unlikely to be known in advance and designed around established theory or method (Bacis & Jack, 2008; Grandy, 2010; Stake, 1995). Studies allow for the use of multiple sources and techniques for data (Soga, 1997). During this case study, I saved forums posts, interviews with community members conducted by video, images, and audio files; and comments on multimedia content. I also conducted interviews and collected the resulting data transcripts, any photos or screenshots that were taken during the interviews, and any other forms of communication with the community participants.

I began participating in Cold Hotdog for research purposes in the fall of 2009. While I used some of the data collected from the fall of 2009 to the summer of 2012, I collected the bulk of the data for this study from the summer of 2012 through February 2014.

A large focus of my data collection was the 2013 Unascer Tourney (The Tourney). The Tourney is a large event for the community in which individuals face off against one another creating short (30 second minimum) animations based on themes chosen by the

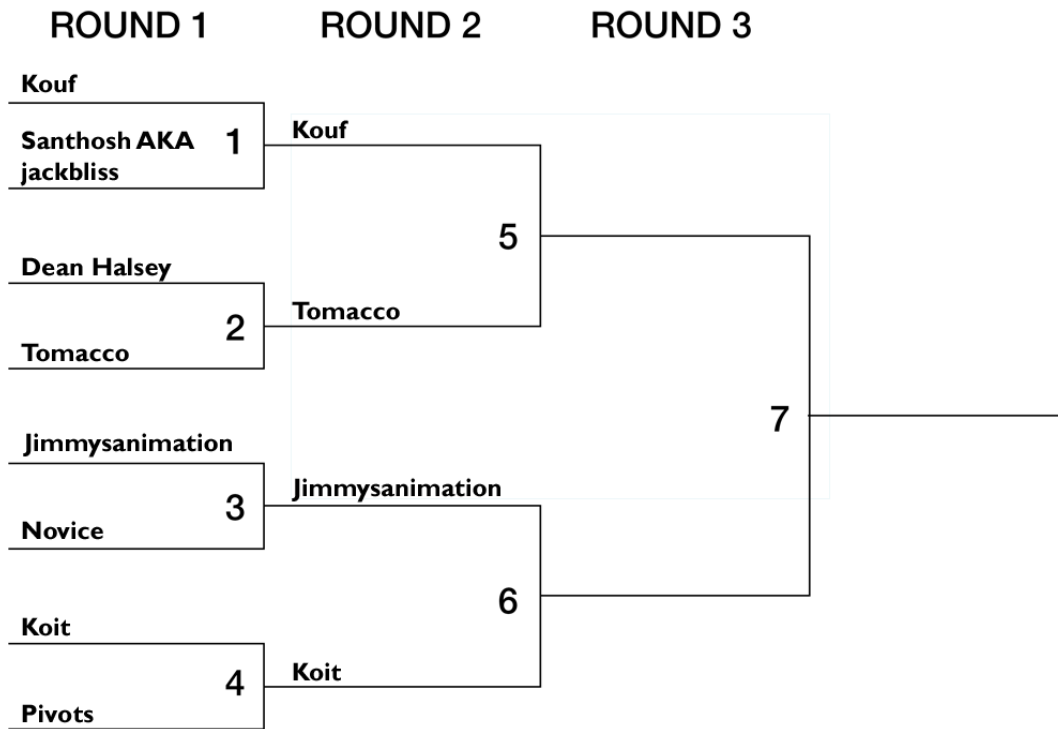


Figure 5. An example of a bracket that one could see in The Tourney. In this partially completed bracket, Kouf and Tomacco will compete against one another and Jimmysanimation will compete against Koit. The winners of those matchups will face one another in Round 3.

organizer (see Figure 5). The emphasis of the competition on creativity and originality timeframes for each round of the tournament are short (weeks) than one would normally take to make an animation under normal circumstances. Winners are rewarded by the community in a variety of ways. The 2013 tournament was a large focus of the data collected because it fell entirely during my participation in the community as the visible participation in the community during the conversation there is more so on technical issues and skill acquisition than during any other period. As such, and because the focus of this project is on motivation and skill acquisition, I spent most of my time participating and interacting with community members in the Flash and tournament subforums during The Tourney.

The interviews that I conducted were structured interviews that ranged from 30 to 80 minutes between December 2012 and February 2014. I included an

interview conducted in January 2013 by a member of the media of one other Cold Hotdog member. In my analysis, I initially contacted subjects for interviews via the internal messaging system in the Cold Hotdog community or via their personal email addresses if they posted them in their community profile. I sent interview requests to individuals who were in the community forums or who had entered The Tourney, and I conducted interviews until the stories that were relayed to me were no longer unique. Out of four interview requests that I sent, I heard responses from and interviewed five individuals. Eight of the interviews were conducted via email while the remaining seven were conducted via Skype. Appendix A contains more information about the interview subjects.

Finally, questions in the interviews were focused on things individuals found out about the community, why they joined, why they started making animations, what physical and/or digital tools they use to help them when they make animations, and how they get and/or provide help when it is needed. Because the interviews were semi-structured, however, they sometimes ventured into unexpected territory including cooking microwave pizza. Nevertheless, the questions that I most often tried to answer are in Appendix B.

Methods and Analysis

Given the type of data collected and the flexibility of case studies to include the use of multiple methods, I considered a myriad of methods including network analysis, face-to-face and online observations, surveys, interviews, content analysis, and web content analysis. Each of these methods has varying strengths and weaknesses. For example, surveys are best for understanding verifiable facts and events, attitude, behavior, and characteristics of participants (Fowler, Jr., 1995; P. M. Nardi, 2003). They are not good for meaning. Because I was interested in not only uncovering verifiable facts but also in understanding how the online space is socially constructed and how that affects the community, I chose to use a combination of methods.

interviews, participant observation, and web content analysis to analyze that I collected in Cold Hotdog.

To interpret this data, I used what Stake (1995) refers to as direct interpretation and categorical aggregation. Direct interpretation involves trying to figure out the significance of coding data, aggregating frequencies, and looking for patterns (Stake, 1995, p. 43). This is an instrumental case study in which looking at general patterns and the reappearance of events is most important. I utilized categorical aggregation. The following are examples of the lower level codes that I assigned to statements in my data.

◀ Advice giving through example

As an example, had we included in the list "The Creation of Adam" from Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel ceiling (which we didn't!), you might pay homage to it by portraying two of your characters in the pose of God and Adam to further demonstrate your characters' relationship (one of them might be a famous movie star and the other a whipping fanboy, for example). But if you merely showed a house's ceiling with that scene painted on it for no just reason, or a scene took place in the Sistine Chapel and showed that on the ceiling, you'd be doing it wrong.

◀ Advice on best practices

Keep it simple. Too many word bubbles or ideas can bog down a strip. If it's possible, show instead of telling. You want to figure out what the punchline is and then work backwards from there. There should be nothing in the strip that doesn't build character or set up the

punchline if you can trace anything in your strip that doesn't do any of these things get rid of it

< Art advice

Abstractness in the background is okay for conveying drug trip but I think it should have contrasted even more with the "real world" palette because you use such cartoony colour & styles there so animation. So when it snapped from "trip" to "normal" view, at first thought the background was just an "emotion" effect that had a "mind-altered" hallucination effect.

< Technique

I've only bothered with using a frame with vertical & horizontal centerlines and the corner-to-corner diagonal & asymmetry guides.

< Encouragement

Don't worry you'll figure it out. You've got tons of times since you're done already.

I then rolled up the low level codes into higher codes such as help via online resources help from friends or through an apprenticeship, encouragement from the community. These higher order codes make up the subsections of the ensuing chapters.

When it came to choosing interview subjects and posts to code I used theoretical sampling whereby data is collected and analyzed cyclically and is controlled by the emerging concepts (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) such a strategy analyzes data, if found more

questions than answers collection continued with an aim towards reaching a point where all concepts were well defined and explained, which should help address fears of selection bias.

As mentioned in the preceding section, I personally conducted a total of 15 interviews with Cold Hotdog members using either email or Skype. Telephone interviews have lower cost than face-to-face interviews and easily allow for the inclusion of geographically dispersed participants while face-to-face interviews can be longer and allow for the use of visual aids and better rapport (Czaja & Blair, 2005) using a technology like Skype that combines the affordances of both the phone and the camera. I was hoping to capitalize on all of these benefits. I always turned on my camera so that interviewees could see my face during the Skype interviews, four of the interviewees chose to leave their cameras turned off and to only communicate via sound. Nevertheless, using Skype was especially useful as many of my interviewees were in other states and at least one was in another country. The big advantage of technology also helped that had the opportunity to talk to some individuals while they were in the space and perhaps even on the machine that they use to create their artifacts. This made it possible to get screenshots of their work environment, which provided more insight into their work process and the types of both physical and digital tools that they use. By using that process also made it easy for them to grab links they had bookmarked or other materials that they wanted to share and to show them to me during the course of our conversation. The interview also allowed me to ask questions about things that were not otherwise apparent from the data collected from the main site or the forums. Because of the advantages of video interviews, I conducted interviews only in times where scheduling became problematic or if the interviewee was uncomfortable with that option.

In addition to conducting interviews, I also participated in the Cold Hotdog community. There are several different ways to participate. As described earlier, one can submit work to be displayed on the home page [Y ' c Z ' h \ Y ' g] h Y ' c f w o c k i n g t h e f o r u m s ; o r o n e c a n e m a i l I F @ M

can talk with other community members in both of these through IRC channels or social networking sites like Twitter and Facebook. Even though I monitored the other spaces, most of my active participation was in the forums. There, I read posts, conversed with community members and provided comments on both submitted work and on banal topics covered during the course of normal forum conversations. However, I did not submit work of my own to be judged by the community members, which may be considered a shortcoming as a study, for I did not get to experience submitting work and getting feedback from the others.

Lastly, while participating in Cold Hotdog, I conducted content analysis (S. Herring, 2010). Older posts in the Cold Hotdog forums content analysis is similar to traditional document analysis, yet it includes not only the examination of text but also the hyperlinks, images, videos, and other content that is a part of the conversation. This analysis added more context to the conversations that I saw brought up in the

Privacy and Ethical Considerations

In general, internet qualitative research is not without its risks. One has to be careful when defining the boundaries of the project (Brace, 2009) with privacy (Flynn, 2009) and with selection and researcher bias. When participating in the community, I was bound by the site domain of Cold Hotdog or by any other predetermined boundaries. Instead, I included any areas that were deemed relevant when engaging in the community and its participants as (2009) as suggested by Hine. I had to be conscious of the privacy of the observed participants of the community in all areas. One concern was the age of the participants. As teens have more likely to share content online in the United States (Lee, Hart, Purcell, Smith, & Zickuhr, 2010), it is likely that nine percent of online teens have admitted to lying about their age in order to gain access to an online service (Madden et al., 2013). It is likely that many of the Cold Hotdog community members are individuals under the age of eighteen though it is not possible to accurately know how many.

Another concern deals with participants who may see it as intrusive and bothersome to request consent before all interactions (Fors & the Association of Internet Researchers Ethics Committee, 2006) and not always possible to do so. To address these concerns, when reporting any findings from observed practices I refrain from using both the real name of the community and the real handles of participants (unless they ask to use their real handles or names). Instead, I utilize pseudonyms (whether I chose or that the participant chose) when using any quotes or material from interviews.

In choosing to use pseudonyms for both the community and its members, I follow the guidelines of Yarnal & Zittel (2002) on "Disguising the group and/or individuals under study." Because I recognize that pseudonyms can and do sometimes function as real names (Bruckman, 2002; Bruckman et al., 2015; Frankel & Singer, 1999), I give participants the opportunity to choose their own pseudonyms for the study or to use their real handles or names. However, allowing them to do so sometimes using direct quotes from my interactions with them hampers my ability to completely shield the community from those who will choose to uncover them using full search engines or even image search engines that can introduce false details as suggested by Bruckman (2002). While Markham (2012) suggests that fabricating interactions or creating site individuals from actual individuals is one way to combat this problem, I refrained from doing so. Nevertheless, I chose to use a pseudonym for the community name, I use slightly modified titles for roles, and I use pseudonyms for users unless I was asked to not do so by a user (Bruckman, 2004). In this case, I follow the contextual integrity framework, which calls for one to respect the informational norms of a community. In this case, Cold Hot Dog is often transmitting information out of that context, while balancing the need to protect the community and acknowledging their credit for their creative and

intellectual work. I also ask you, the reader, to refrain from conducting searches to attempt to discover the community or the individuals under study herein.

Finally, in addition to using pseudonyms to address privacy and ethics, I included information in my profile and my forum signature to self-identify myself, which included a URL to a webpage (the text is included in Appendix C) with more information about my project. This made members aware of my presence and purpose in the community that they were able to make an informed decision about whether or not to communicate with me. This otherwise unencumbered participation allowed me to interact with community members more frequently than an interview or survey would have made it possible for me to better understand the observed events, traditions, and community norms as they panned out (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995).

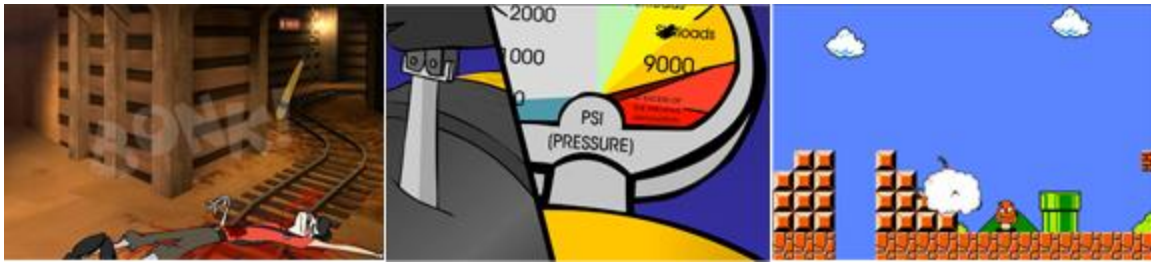


Figure 6 Spy & Pyrovideo. Captured 6 December 2015 from <http://www.newgrounds.com/portal/view/527566>

After generally talking about the weather or what they chose to interview him or her, the first questions usually asked an interviewee was how he or she got interested in animation and when he or she started animating. Prior to starting this project, I thought I knew at the least that the first question. Cartoons! Video games! Or something else along that vein. Looking at threads on Cold Hotdog (CHD) forums and talking to members, I found that that in fact was the case for many of them. Just Freund (2011) found in the wedding community when looking for what initially sparked interest in that art form, several CHD members were initially drawn to animation through cartoons, movies, and video games. However, he also mentioned other things that I had not thought of including comic books and comic strips, flipbooks, and content shared on Cold Hotdog or similar online communities. One member Kouf mentioned in an interview that simply watching flash animations on Newgrounds and YouTube made him download the trial Adobe Photoshop CS5 and play around in it. From there, he went on to use a trial version of Adobe Flash CS5 to make his first animation, which he submitted to The Tourney in 2012.

5 [c c X Y I U a d Y c Z \ c k g c a Y c Z h \ Y g Y] b Z i Y
 Spy & Pyro from which screenshots can be found in Figure 6. The first frame shows the word
 [6 c b _ I Z U] b h m k f] h h Y b c b h \ Y B g W r Y e V i s i o n U Z h Y f U
 show from the 1970s and setting us in mind the interactions between Wile E.

Coyote and Road Runner in the Warner Bros. produced animated series which Coyote was routinely injured during his pursuit of Road Runner. The second frame has a staggered comic book panel layout that will be familiar to readers, and the third frame is an homage to the popular 1985 Super Mario Bros. game that will probably be familiar to many video game players. While not all animations feature these references, especially not references to so many different types of art forms, animation makes salient the connection between those art forms and the animation in CHD.

From Interest to Production

Learning about the types of things that spurred interest in animation was one thing, from there, I wanted to know how that interest turned into actual work. I was especially interested to see if the motivators for animating resembled those from communities that share some of the same sources of inspiration as CHD such as the vidding, gaming, and computer programming communities. I found that there is indeed a significant overlap. For example, when I asked Koit during an interview whether or not he got started for fun, he responded with the following statement:

No, I started actually doing Photoshop work, which is editing photos, obviously, to make it a funny image or whatever, melding an owl with a cat or something like that. I started doing that and then I thought, " = Ñ ` ` ` h U _ Y ` h \] g ` c b Y ` further I ` U arve making web GIFs. I tried to make them blink and stuff like that and then make GIFs out of that. And then people recognized I could do animations and I saw other people doing Flash. I thought = Ñ ` ` ` [] j Y ` h \ U h ` U ` [c "

Later, he commented:

Because I like creating. And I like to add to my top catalog of content.

5 b X ' m c i ' _ b c k ž '] h Ñ g ' b] WY ' h c ' V Y '] b j c ` j Y X '] b
f Y U ` ` m ' X c b Y '] h ' V Y Z c f Y ' h \ Y ' ` U g h ' W c i d ` Y ' c Z ' n
the " ' B c h ' V Y W U i g Y ' = ' h \ c i [\ h ' = Ñ X ' k] b ' V i h ' V Y W
h c ' k] b " ' = Ñ a ' b c h ' h \ U h ' [c c X ' U b X ' = Ñ a ' b c h '] b h Y
b c h ' U g ' [c c X ' U g ' c h \ Y f ' d Y c d ` Y " ' : c f ' a Y ž '] h Ñ g ']

In our conversation, Koit acknowledged many different things as motivators, some analogous to the motivators found in other communities: self-development, skill improvement, intellectual stimulation, and enjoyment. Self-development, which they defined as learning from others in the field (WY] j] b [' Z Y Y X V U W _ ž ' U b X ' was noted by Greg and Nox (2008)), and Nox (2008) in the open source community. Similarly, a desire to work on a particular skill, intellectual stimulation, and enjoyment were found to be the open source community by Lakhani and Wro (2005).

Another motivator that Koit hints at is the desire for a challenge, to continue to push himself. Other individuals in the community also noted this motivator as many of them attempted their first animation to compete in either a school or online competitive school project. This motivator is most related to the achievement motivation (2006) noted by Yee in the MMORPG community wherein individuals were driven by a desire to continue to improve and outperform others in a game. There is a slight distinction between the MMORPG motivators and the CHD motivators, however, when it comes to the desire to learn or improve upon a skill was a motivator in CHD, the vidding community, and the open source community. Perhaps surprisingly though, this desire to learn was not found to be a motivator

MMORPG community that (2006) studied. Instead, he found that learning or the desire to work on a particular skill was not a motivating factor but was instead a way that a person behaved in the game once they began playing. I see a similar distinction in CHD.

To further demonstrate CHD motivators, here is a quote from the Cold Hotdog forums by an individual known as Poster1:

I always loved special effects in movies, especially movies like star wars, and also [sic] game making programs out there so I googled it and found a game make messed around with it for about 2 years, made several (half completed) games. anyone can call it a movie, but that gave me a thirst to find something that I could make a real movie with. In my search I stumbled upon this program called flash. [...]

Poster1, like Koit, notes desire for improvement, intellectual stimulation, and enjoyment of the animating. This process of moving from enjoying professional movies to creating his or her own games over the course of several years with first a simple more complex tool like Flash is also similar to the process (2010) it is a process that benefits greatly from communities of practice such as the community surrounding Cold Hotdog. I will address this notion further in subsequent chapters.

Another motivator to begin animating amongst Cold Hotdog members was the encouragement of others, especially family, either through direct admonishments or by simply setting good examples:

I guess I wanted to make something to be proud of (I was 10, kinda hard to remember motives). My cousin set me up with a camera and taught me how to make motion animation with it. She taught me the concept of showing short clips in rapid succession to simulate music.

Seven years ago my father walks into my room and plays so many video games. Make your own throws a copy of Flash at me.

I started a year and a half ago, a friend of mine gave me a pirated copy, and said she was having trouble working with it, and I said I'd be better at it then she was.

Once when I was over my cousin's house I believe, he was playing around with Flash 4. He let me play around with it, and I had to constantly ask him what button I had to press to make a frame. As far I can remember, my first animation was based on?

My mom used to be a Web Designer for a living, she made sites for people and stuff, she had a site that listed popular places for a lot of the states, I think they were a c g h ` m ` WU ` ` Y X ` " 5 f c i b X k \ U h Y j Y f g h U h Y " Wc a " ` O A folder that had no links to her site for Tucson, and I called it "Poster5web" V Y WU i g Y ž ` k Y `g ` X Y] g] k U ğ " D o ğ h Y f k U g ` + ` U b X ` U ` V] She taught me how to save images on the computer to certain files, and how to make new pages and hyperlinks to the page. It was really stupid, but

there's nothing really good you could expect from a 7 year old who has only just started animation. (Poster5)

While I did not find other studies that cited encouragement from friends and family as motivators in communities similar to Cold Hot Dog (2006), I did find the likelihood of usage of MMORPGs with individuals who are emotionally invested to be quite high, especially amongst female players. Also, the recognition and reputation gaining motivators that were noted (2010) by Oreg and No (2008) in the amateur multimedia community and open source community respectively can be seen to relate to this encouragement motivator. It is unreasonable to then demonstrate that ability (and making significantly better animations at that) part of the overall encouragement motivator that I noted.

Another thing that must be noted when it comes to this encouragement motivator, especially in the case of Surn, Poster4, Poster5, and others who were closely involved by who also were involved in either animating or in the field, is the importance of seeing someone with whom one can identify that is already performing the skill that one is trying to learn. As noted in a number of articles concerning the racial and gender gap (Bonetta, 2010; Dimitriadi, 2013; Simard, 2009; Trapp, 2014), seeing and/or knowing someone that either looks like or is similar to oneself goes a long way to convince someone that they can acquire the skill in a trade. Even in the presence of all of the other motivators that I have discussed thus far, if one does not believe that they can succeed at anything, it is not likely that they will attempt to try to do so. While I have not done any work to determine whether or not the motivators that I have discovered have different weights or affect individuals in different ways, it would be a good follow-up study to see whether or not this encouragement motivator carries more weight than others.

Finally, finding an outlet being able to express oneself is a motivation to begin animating. An example of this can be found in the video by Surn from our interview which he talked about how his cousin helped him to make his first animation. In another interview, Dean Halsey noted how he painstakingly made an animation using PowerPoint at the age of 10! (2011) (digital or physical) was a repeated story during this study and is similar to the stories that vidders recounted to Freese (2011) during her study. The vidders described music as a big motivator the desire to tell a story with that music and other media that they felt was not already being done. Many of the CHD animators, especially the animators who specialized in parodies, echoed these sentiments. For example, like WooleyWorld, it was simple. (2011)

To recap, Cold Hotdog animators' initial interest in animation was sparked by both expected and unexpected art forms: cartoons, video games, comic books and comic strips, flipbooks, and animated content found in online multimedia communities including Cold Hotdog itself. Moving from consumer to producer of animated content occurred for a myriad of different reasons including desires for self-development which includes learning and getting feedback; skill improvement; the desire for a challenge; intellectual stimulation; encouragement from others; the need for an outlet to express oneself. Interestingly, both the sources of initial interest and the subsequent motivation for participation have significant overlap with similar communities including the vidding, gaming, and open source communities despite some of the differences in the domain, skills necessary for participation, and participation demographics. In the case of the heavily female vidding community, the next chapter, I will detail how CHD members picked up the skills to animate once they decided to step

Figure 7. How to Create Animations?



Figure 7. Screenshot of Koit's Flash workspace captured by Koit on 11 February 2013 during his Skype interview with the author who can be seen in the lower-left corner.

Status serves as a big motivator for continued participation in online communities (Litt, 2010b; Oreg & Nov, 2008; Yee, 2006) way that status is gained and demonstrated in Cold Hotdogs through the ways that one claims to have gained the skills necessary to This made easy to either find stories or examples of skill acquisition in the forums or to elicit them in conversation with members who were eager to improve mastery in this way.

Creating complete animations requires the combination of many different skill sets including storytelling, music editing (and maybe even music creation), drawing, coloring, and putting together in a way that simulates a real-world environment. Putting graphics together can be done in a myriad of ways including using cameras, programming, and/or programs such as Flash. A screenshot of which can be seen about Figure 7. During my study, CHD members expressed such methods of

acquiring these skills formal schooling help from friends or through an apprenticeship relationship, online resources including tutorials and message boards, or offline materials including the tutorials in the Flash software, reverse engineering Flash videos learning by example, and trial and error. Most individuals used a combination of these methods, for example, combining help from friends and online resources.

Of course, there were also those who claimed to magically learn how to animate:

I walked from the living room to the kitchen with an unopened copy of Flash on my head. I then knew the true story.

I was generally engineered to make flash, go this 'X' h Y g h ' h i V Y ' X U m g .
(Poster)8

I discounted those stories as pure humor. However, there were also those who claimed that they were self-taught:

As far as learning, I had a good self-taught (and not a U b] a U h Y ž ' very good yet) (Poster)9

Much as Lang (2014) found in her study of young YouTube video creators, upon Z i f h \ Y f ' e i Y g h] e h U] i b [[\ ž ĩ k ' \ i U g h i ' U V Y '] m b [a ' Y ĩ U g b Y h ' Z k U g ' h \ U h ' animate outside of a formal classroom environment without the help of software, either by reverse engineering existing animations or with help in the form of tutorials, books, or online forums:

= h Ñ g ' h f i Y ž ' m c i ' W U b ' ' Y U f b ' : ' U g \ ' k] h \ c i h ' c i h

I self-taught myself on animation, but I used the tutorials on

CHD, mostly from the 'fl D c g h Y f % % Ł ' .

Most of my actionscripting knowledge I learned by myself too, but I have read a few things on it. (Poster12)

I learned flash from one of the most unused yet underestimated places ever BuiltIn Tutorials! (insert gasp) (Poster13)

Keeping this in mind, the following sections, I will go into more detail about how described acquiring skills each of the ways expressed by the Cold Hotdog members.

Formal Schooling

As noted earlier, making animations requires a myriad of skills, some of which are not part of the typical American public K-12 school curriculum such as music editing or other online communities including YouTube (Lange, 2014) and in American culture in general (Crotan, 1990) the idea of being self-taught or being an "self-made" man is valued and carries a great deal of esteem amongst CHD members. In fact, some individuals denigrate those who use the assistance of others for help:

I got mine in 4th grade... 8th grade now so... 4 years. I had no help from books, internet or what [sic] and if [sic] needed help, it would be for the gamin [sic]. I did start out badly, got the mic last year ago, learn to stream a month after that [sic] now [sic] am, not the greatest but creatain [sic] not the worst animator [sic] lol to people who took it for class... Psh, teachers tend to make bad animatio 😊 (Poster14)

Because of this, many of the members either deny getting help when acquiring skills or they downplay the help that they received as Poster12 does in the previous sheets in my

discussions with members, I learned that many CHD members had taken part in formal training to acquire useful related skills.

Unsurprisingly, many individuals recalled taking classes at least high school (or the equivalent of high school in their country) with some taking classes as early as elementary school. These art classes usually covered the basics of drawing and different media and introduced them to the use of some of the classes at this level included using software for drawing, however, just physical media.

According to G \ U a i g \ 7 i \ \ U b Y ž \ h \ Y \ U b] a Show White \ c \ a U [c c X \ U b] a U h c f g \ g \ c i \ X \ Î _ b c k \ U \ [f Y U h \ X Y U \ \ U V c i to make funny drawings and (1990, sp. 16) encountered few individuals CHD who took and recommended drama or acting classes. Including two of my interviewees, Novice and Rob, who acknowledged independent acting classes and film classes respectively as something that impacted their animating. Additionally, during a discussion about giving characters realistic poses and movements in animations, one animator expressed their opinion about the utility drama classes

If you ever have a chance to take a class, I highly recommend it, you learn a lot about character and it's a lot of fun too! Heck, it isn't uncommon for an animator doing character animation to first act out the action (many even record it for reference later) to get into the character and their timing and poses. (Poster15)

This discussion then proceeded with advice that Poster15 gleaned from the course that they had taken, which appeared to be well received. The advice seemed surprising to some of the



Figure 8 An image entitled *Deer in Motion* by Eadweard Muybridge (1881)

CHD member, however, for they had not previously thought how physical acting could improve their digital creations.

In addition to art and drama classes, members recalled taking computer programming courses. Rob, one of the animators that I interviewed, first animation for a competition at the end of a computer programming and repair course during his junior year of high school. Other, like Koit, took programming courses at the collegiate level. Both the skills learned in these courses and the process of learning how to break problems into smaller problems taught in these courses are all useful when creating animations. In Flash in particular, in using many images with slight differences in order to simulate movement (for example, see how the deer seems to be running in Figure 8), one can use the object-oriented programming language ActionScript to simulate movement. Using only ActionScript commands, an image can be made move across the screen or to change in some of the ways. If one chooses to animate using ActionScript, the utility of a programming class is forward.

Lastly, animation courses, both concerning the history of animation and those that usually teach animation techniques, were useful to the community members who took them. Seven of the

fifteen individuals that I interviewed were either currently enrolled in or had previously taken animation, visual communication, or multimedia classes. These classes seemed to vary in Z c Wi g ' Z f c a ' h \ Y ' h f U X] h] c b U ` ' Z c f a ' c Z ' U b] a U h] c b ' Z `] d ' h \ Y ' d U [Y g ' U b X ' h \ (CulZah, 1990, p.11) which drawings are produced either using physical media like paper or software programs like Flash to 3D animation using tools like Maya or Blender.

Help From Friends or Through Apprentice-Mentoring Relationships

Two of the first threads I happened upon Y ' 7 c ` X ' < c h X c [' Wc a a i b] h U ' k c f h \ m ' : ` U g \ ' U d d f Y b h] WY " ž ' 9 b e i] f m ' k] h \] b " Ĩ ' MC I ' A I G H ' D 5 G G ' In both threads, a more seasoned animator offered to help teach an animator with less experience, but the animators seeking a mentor were asked to demonstrate both that they had some level of experience animating, even if it was very little experience, demonstrate that they were willing to put in the work necessary to become better at their craft. Using terms from the community of practice literature, the apprentices needed to show h \ U h ' h \ Y m ' \ U X ' d U f h] W] d U h Y These demonstrations tended to be Ĩ ' within reason including making a short animation based on a topic proposed by the potential mentor or simply expressing to the potential mentor why they wanted the opportunity to be their apprentice. This type of learning arrangement is similar to the by Steinkuehl (2004) and Lindtner et al (2008) online gaming communities in which guided others through the completion of tasks, or in the words of the players observed by Lindtner et al (2008) players would intentionally sit next to players who were playing the game that they could talk to and h ' U b X ' ` Y U f b ' Z f c a ' Y U W \ ' c h \ Y f Ñ g ' c even do this in cases in which they did not know the player that they were observing! U ` (2007) ethnography of *World of Warcraft* players, they noticed similar collaborative learning

behavior in world where players would devise strategies and work together. These behaviors are reminiscent of those prescribed by social cognitivists.

Another example of CHD members offering to help in the form of collaboration projects as in the forums. More aligned with the constructivist view of learning, these collaborations are a common way for individuals to attempt to both gain more experience in animation and to network despite the fact that many collaboration projects do not lead to a finished animation because of poor communication, poor teamwork, or poorly defined project parameters (Muller & Bruckman, 2008).

Because of this, I was surprised to see an open embrace of accepting help from others both within the community and out. However, the presence of the threads that I found in which users were both soliciting and responding to mentorship relationships demonstrate that these types of relationships are not necessarily something of which one should be ashamed and were in fact common. One of the individuals that I interviewed explicitly acknowledged asking friends or colleagues for help while seven of them noted friends or family members who were also in either the animation field that they could use as a resource if needed. This type of support was usually in addition to other resources, however, as in this recount from Jimmysanimation when I asked him how he got started learning Flash:

I just kind of messed around in the program and I worked through it, and I may have asked the guys that turned me on to it for points here and there. But at that

initial stage I just kind of did it, and then moving forward, I wanted to you know create, I wanted to change the layout, I wanted to have a wide screen look so moved to that, I had to look up how to do just little things that seem so easy.

This use of multiple types of help when learning how to animate was not unique to Jimmysanimation or was it unique to those who had learned from others. Another animator, Novice, also recounted to me how he chose both a friend and online videos to help him when he was first starting to animate:

Friend taught me the basics, from there I took his advice and experimented with what he taught me and tried to simulate different ways of which I could use my newly taught knowledge. I also watched tutorial videos from renowned professional freelance animators.

Notice how both Novice and Jimmysanimation both mention that they learned things on their own even in the midst of utilizing help from others and using online resources. This continued multi-source explanation of help was repeated by the course of my study. The next section will go into more depth of the use of online resources.

Finally, in addition to talking about how he learned with the help of others Jimmysanimation also highly recommended that beginners reach out to animators for advice and help:

I would target these individuals like an Andrew Kepple or myself or anyone and I mean people that are not able to initiate by such a thing of your work.

h \] b _ ' h \ U h ' b] b Y ' h] a Y g ' c i h ' c Z ' h Y b ' m c i Ñ X ' [Y h
even make possibly a relationship like a mentorship that you could then use
throughout your career and kind of bounce ideas off that other person because
they would always appreciate you respecting their work and their path.

He had a great experience sending a cold email to an animator employed in the animation field
responded with a multiple email. He found the experience both really useful and now considers
important to respond in kind to those who reach out to him now that he has gained more
experience.

Online Resources

Unsurprisingly, online resources were mentioned and used by many of the individuals with
whom I spoke. The types of resources varied, however, from web pages returned after doing
searches using a search engine to structured tutorials to web forums, including
the CHD community forum. Most community members seemed to use search engines for simple
\ Y ` d ' U g '] b ' h \ Y ' W U g Y ' c Z ' >] a a m g U b] a U h] c b Ñ g ' U h h Y
in the quote in the previous section.

The structured tutorials were used whenever a person wanted to complete a more
complex task such as tweening (a tweening is an interpolation technique where an animation program generates
extra frames between two images to give the illusion of motion) or loading a custom built
indicator that informs the viewer that content is being loaded into a Flash player (a Flash player is a
button in Flash). The tutorials to which the members referred were hosted both in the CHD
community and on external sites. They were both in video and text. The text-based
tutorials usually, if not always, included images to bolster the information. Figure 9 is an example of
an image in one of the tutorials found which the tutorial author used to point out



Figure9. A screenshot of a menu in Adobe's Flash tool that I found in an online tutorial.

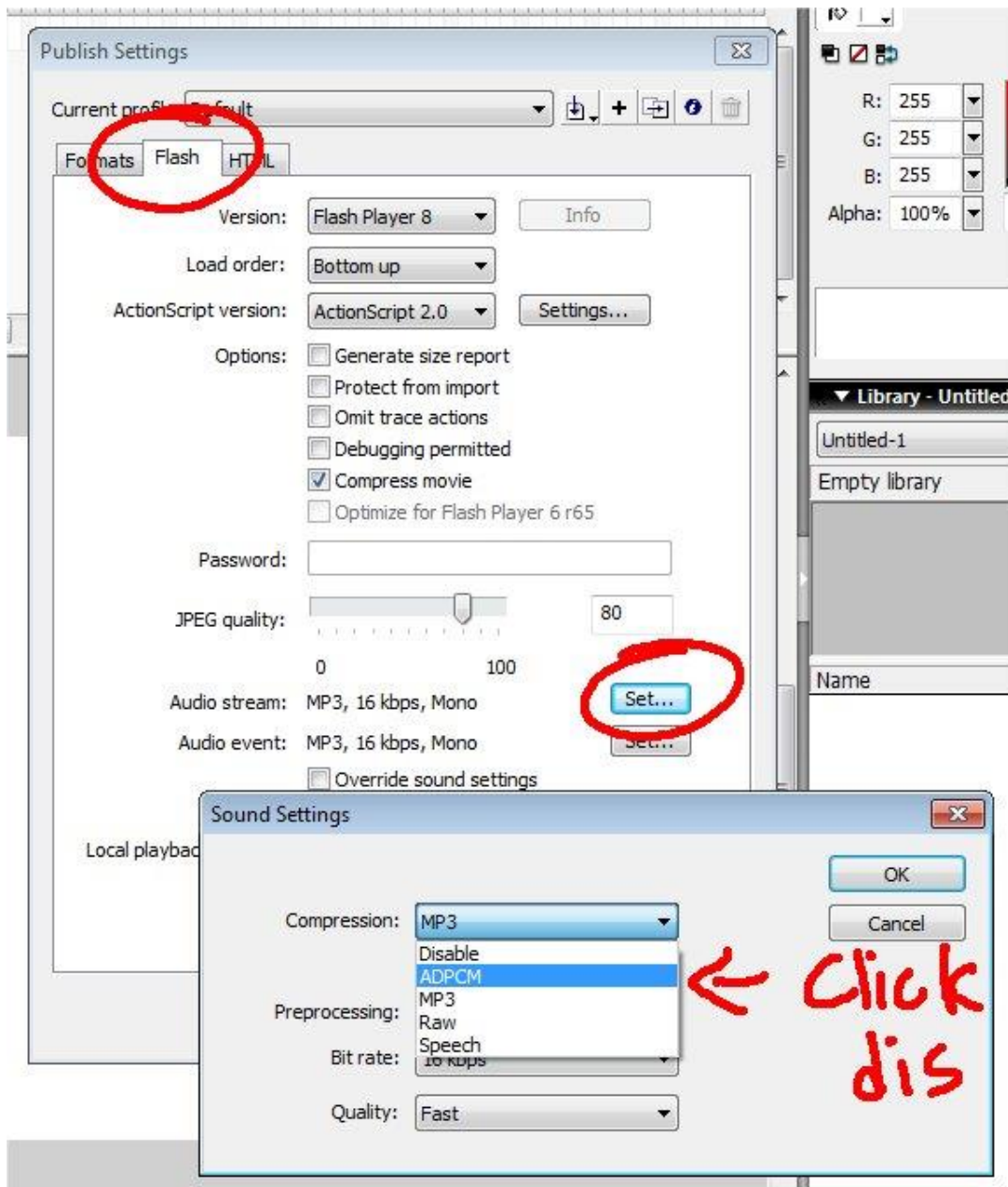


Figure10. An example of a red circle diagram on menus and windows in an older version of

for the reader to understand what the author is trying to impart and for the author who does not have to try to describe the interface using only words.

In addition to using images, tutorial authors would occasionally use annotations on the images. I refer to these images as diagrams. Red diagrams, such as the Figure 10 specifically call out portions of the image to the reader and they provide extra information. Using Figure 10 as an example, it would be much more onerous to explain using just words which menus to click, which tab to select, and which buttons to click in order to pull up the Sound Settings in Adobe Flash than it was to just create the image and circle the menus and buttons. This is especially the case when you can use the tool that you are trying to explain in order to create the diagram itself! I was surprised to see many of these screenshots within the forums and on auxiliary sites. While they are not always created with red ink, the function of the annotations seemed to perform the same purpose: point out features and to add more explanation.

In addition to full tutorials, CHD members would also provide more ad hoc ways to questions posed by community members. Sometimes a simple textual answer would suffice. Other times, the question was answered with a short ActionScript code snippet. Poster17 provided this code snippet in the forum can be used during the creation of buttons on (release) {gotoAndStop(2); }. The code describes what happens when one releases the mouse button after clicking on some object. In this specific instance, when one releases the mouse button, the movie clip will go to the second frame, and the action will stop. What is interesting about code sharing was how little explanation accompanied the snippets. Usually

g \ U f] b [' k U g ' X c b Y ' U Z h Y f ' U b c h \ Y f ' d Y f g c b ' d c g Y X ' U
 butt b ' i g] b [' 5 W h] c b G W f] d h 3 Ĩ ž ' Z c f ' Y I U a d ` Y " ' G c ž ' h \

explanation as to how the code worked, where to put the code in the Flash tool, how to run
 any other explanation that might help a true novice that a base level of competence was
 expected when community members helped one another with code snippets that was not a
 with some of the other ways that help was given.

Besides code snippets, CHD members would also provide images or screenshots as
 responses to questions. These images were typically not animated like, but they
 would usually be accompanied by explanatory text. Example of this is Figure 12 in
 which one CHD member shares two pictures of his workspace in response to someone who is
 thinking about getting a new tablet with a mouse instead of continuing to use a computer
 and mouse setup. After these images, the animator gave lengthy explanations as to how mu
 Y e i] d a Y b h ' W c g h ' U b X ' k \ m ' h \ Y ' Y e i] d a Y b h ' k U g ' g Y h '
 the left, so can access the Ctrl + Z key, and the mouse to the right if I need quicker function
 U b X ' \ Y U j] Y f ' h] a Y `] b Y ' W c b h f c ` " Ĩ ' < Y ' U ` g c ' d f c j] X

Since you're looking to purchase second hand I guess it would be a

] X Y U ' h c ' g Y Y '] Z ' m c i ' W U b ' Z] b X ' 9 L ' g h c f Y ' X] g d `
 you can find yourself a Wacom Cintiq 21UX (brand new \$2500) or on ebay for
 about 1500 h a " ' = ' h \] b _ ' m c i Ĩ X ' V Y ' e i] h Y ' k Y ` ` ' c Z Z '
 with a cheaper model like myself (side) really well worth the money.

8 c b Ĩ h ' V i m ' h \ Y ' K U W c a ' 7] b h] e ' % & K L ' h \ c i [\ " ' K \
 consideration first, the SIZE and also the resolution and colour depth specs.

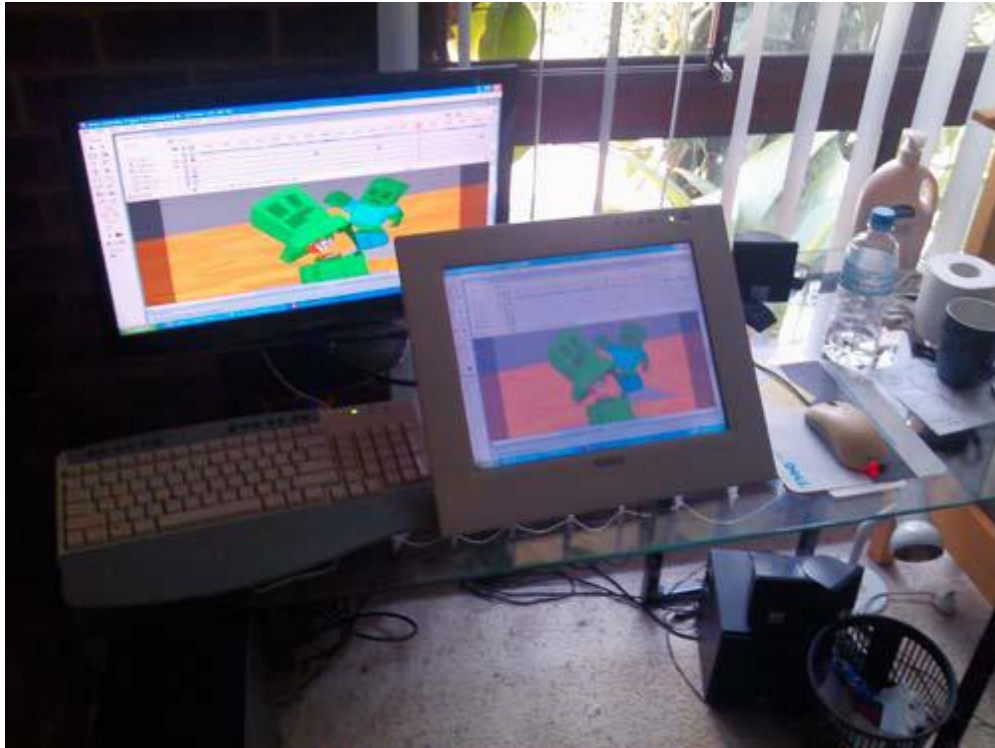


Figure 11. A CHD member's animation workstation setup.



Figure 12. An electronic pen used by a CHD member.

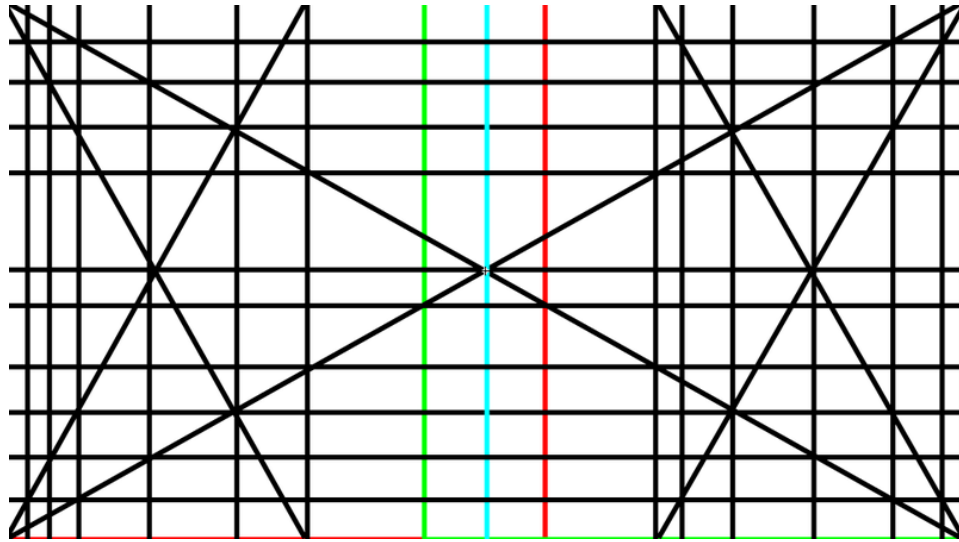


Figure 13. An example of the Golden Grid or the Golden Rectangle.

Such an in-depth explanation was welcomed by the community and encouraged others to also contribute with their own suggestions and experiences with comparable equipment. As is common, the community members both chided and expressed admiration at the original poster's animations that he had put up to that point with only a mouse.

An important thing to note here is that the amount of experience of the person posing the question and the community's understanding in the community were undoubtedly contributors to the type of response that query engendered and to the discussion that followed. I saw much more succinct responses to either individuals who were newer to the community or to individuals that asked questions that could be easily answered using simple search engines. When possible, individuals are first expected to try to help themselves (Cohen, Fealey, & Ackerman, 2009) and if it appeared that they had not done so, responses could be quite curt.

Another way that I saw CHD community members helping one another online was by simple tip sharing. In the course of animating and/or working with others, it was common for someone to learn something new or to figure out how to more efficiently animate whether their tool of choice was Flash. In instances like this, as opposed to waiting for someone to pose a

query about a technique or shortcut, CHD members would share this information unsolicited. This information would sometimes come in the form of a story, in image, or video. For example, as shown in Figure 13, the information was shared by Poster18 after she worked on a project with a much older male. She was surprised to see that he was using the Golden Grid or Golden Rectangle to move through the design space. The proportions of the golden rectangle in classical Greek art and architecture experiments have shown that the golden grid holds great aesthetic appeal (Backlund & Loggatt Jr., 1969; Fechner, 1871). However, this concept or tool, despite its utility, is probably not something that one with formal art or design training would cursorily come across in their informal training. So, Poster18 and others who come across similar information are compelled to share with their colleagues. This work sums up the appreciation for and the efficacy of such information much better than I could have. It has been used [in a manner] that [is] helpful [in a way] that [is] helpful. Things right or not. This dude lets MATH do the work for you!

The final way that observed CHD members seeking help via online resources was through design critiques in the CHD forums. Design critiques or juries are a part of formal design education. They typically consist of a student presenting their work and receiving feedback from other students, professors, and potentially other design professionals (Aptofess, 1991). A study by Dannels and Martin (2008) on design critiques tended to last between two and four hours during which approximately 20% of the time the remaining time devoted to verbal feedback. They found four different types of feedback in their study: decreasing frequency judgment, process oriented, brainstorming, interpretation, direct recommendation, investigation, free association, comparison, and similarity finding.

feedback were also offered in the CHD forums, especially in a more judgment process oriented, and direct recommendation.

CHD design critiques were initiated either by an animator seeking advice or by the prompting of a community elder who wanted to help others improve. In the former case, the animator would typically post an animation or animatic (a short version of a movie typically consisting of successive sections of a storyboard optionally with accompanying music and sound effects) and ask the community members for advice on technical or artistic improvements or for their opinions on the work. Then the community members would respond, usually in text, but occasionally, they would also provide links to resources that the animator would find useful or they would include snapshots of their own work or animations to demonstrate ways that the animator could improve or work more efficiently.

In the latter case which design critiques occurred a community elder would typically provide a prompt for others such as creating in a scene a character jumps from one roof to another or to work on squash, stretch, and timing by animating a bouncing ball. As mentioned earlier, the types of feedback by these requests varied as did the tone of the feedback. For example, in response to a ball bouncing exercise, Poster15 responded to another animator in glowing terms:

I laughed, I cried, then I nominated it for the Emmys. It's like I was in the ball's head. I knew what it was thinking, I could feel the desperation, of each bounce pushing onward yet the helpless feeling of being limited by the physical form, so simple, so perfect, yet not enough. The turmoil felt within the ball expressed in the style you choose, unconfusingly chaotic yet predictable until the sudden abrupt and unpredicted end. I'm kind of disappointed though, this was just supposed to be a simple throwaway exercise, and here you go getting all



Figure 14. This is an example of a stick figure "looking" as provided by Post15.

fancy!

In response to a prompt proposing, however, Poster15 responded differently. In addition to providing figures, she still gave encouragement, but expressed doubt as to how an inexperienced animator could improve:

One of the things that bothered me is how little thinking happened with the character. He did one thing, then the next thing, then the last thing. While technically there was nothing "wrong" with it, it lacked interesting things, like slipping or poses to express what he's thinking. You did give a brief pause at 26 frames in for him to stop and think, and that was good! One of the tricks I learned in the theater is that even though *you* have the script and know exactly what things the character is going to do as they're going to say, the character is experiencing this all for the first time. They don't know, for example, k \ Y b ' h \ Y m ' [c '] b h c ' h \ Y] f ' _] h W \ Y b ' h \ Y f Y fi g ' [c more relevant example, for the rooftop scenario I might have had him look at the far away building and then at the edge of his building then back at the building, sizing up the gap. You're working with stick figures and have to use full body acting to see where he's "looking".

At this point, she provided the character with the instruction: "I like to reverse the 'c' line of action to make the character a lot more fun than just standing straight up and moving just their head. Next, once he's decided to do this, I'll have him run, building up speed until a footstep or two before the edge, fully intending until that moment to make the jump over edge of the roof to the next, posture bent forward / . Then, when he changes his mind his posture changes completely, feet possibly even trying to back peddle (sic) with his feet while pinwheeling his arms. Then I'd have him stop."

Finally, she ends by addressing what would happen once the character actually made the leap and how that differed from what the animator had presented in their animation:

Even while jumping through the air your character is in this pose. Now, I'm not the sort who jumps from building to building (or admits to it, lest my super villain identity be discovered) but that doesn't keep me from finding a reference to see how something like this might look. <http://youtu.be/pG63ffTm1r0> of the video I saw a lot of these poses come up when he's jumping. First he crouched down (sometimes not that far, if he had the momentum of a run behind it, but just enough) to get enough of a push off with the next pose. The top of his jump he brought his legs up to his body making himself smaller and more aerodynamic. It makes a HUGE difference! As he comes out of the jump he's preparing to land and extends his legs out, which cushions his impact leaving him in a pose similar to the one he started with.



Figure 15 A diagram illustrating how a character's pose should change during a jump to make it look more realistic.

What is fascinating in this critique is the myriad of ways that she provides advice all while finding ways to work around the limitations of using only the affordances of the web forum. She provides short scenarios to explain her thinking, images to demonstrate some of the techniques she describes, and she uses simple keyboard symbols such as the forward slash and back demonstrate posture. She provides external links to a live action YouTube video of young doing parkour, and then she shows via an image, how she would convert the things she saw in live action video into a drawing (see Figure 15). She also introduced new terminology to the young U b] a U h c f g ' g i W \ ' U g ' Î `] b Y ' c Z ' U W h] c b ž Ī ' k \] W \ ' \ Y ` CHD CoP. Though Anthony (1991) noted that a climate of fear, defensiveness, and stress is associated with the feedback given in typical design critiques, perhaps the richness of the feedback incentivize CHD members to willingly participate in these activities. It is also possible that having the critiques occur asynchronously and not in person also helps make these critiques more palatable for members. Unfortunately, I did not get a chance to talk to any of the community members about these hypotheses, but the fact that these critiques continued to take place demonstrated that at least some of the community members found them useful.

Offline Resources

Perhaps it is a bit odd that I have a separate section here for offline resources considering I have already talked about friends that people consult and find that have advanced the animating experience of CHD members. This section, however, is for the inanimate, offline resources that came up when conversing with CHD members. They rarely mentioned offline resources. Most of the time they only mentioned resources after I prompted them. The most often cited offline resources were the tutorials that were built into the Flash software books written on animating, Flash, and/or ActionScript.

The tutorials that come with the Flash software typically a mix of videos and starter files (e.g., images and music clips) that help get started. As Adobe continues to transition more of its tools from the desktop to cloud based services, more of its tutorials hosted online in the form of webpages and videos.

When it comes to books, of the nine individuals in my interviews that talked about using books, seven mentioned *The 5th Year Manual of Methods, Principles and Formulas for Classical, Computer, Stop Motion and Internet Animation* by Richard Williams. While stressing that after he read the book he realized that ActionScript was not for him, one of my interviewees mentioned *Learn ActionScripting in 24 Hours* by Jeffrey Kegler. In addition to the *Sams Teach Yourself in 24 Hours* series, the *Sams Teach Yourself Flash MX ActionScript in 24 Hours* by Gary Rosenzweig and the *Sams Teach Yourself ActionScript 3* by Philip Kerman. The only other book mentioned was for a more recent version of Flash, *Flash, to Cheat in Adobe Flash CS5 Art of Design and Animation* by Chris Georgens. The animator did not comment on whether or not he found that particular book to be useful.

Reverse Engineering or Learning by Example

While many of the CHD members that I talked to at some point mentioned that they reverse engineered their work, in fact, they did not. In fact, they took existing animations and tried to break them down into smaller components in order to better understand what they were doing was in the words of Dean Halsey during our interview, “I look at what other people’s work, deconstruct it, and try to figure out what they did. I watched Flash animations on various websites to get an idea of what was possible, and what they were attempting to do by example. A social cognitivist notion of learning by example is that by doing this, they were trying to better understand use of color, use of music and other sound cues, the rules of spacing and pacing, and humor and the types of characters that could be told using the medium. Almost all of the CHD members that I interviewed, however, said that they admired, kept up with, or even emulated with their own work, so this attempt to learn by example seemed pervasive and is in fact not uncommon. The use of examples is customary in creative design (R. Herring, Chang, Krantzler, & Bailey, 2009) and has been shown to increase both novelty and the number of ideas generated (Sydes, Ilue, Chan, Gajos, & Dow, 2015).

Trial and Error

The final way that animators claimed to learn their animation skills was by trial and error. Just as Anton (2013) found in informal game design clubs, some individuals in the CHD community simply jumped right into an animating tool and tried to create something on their own. I interviewed one individual who did this, and he said that he would pick things up without outside help. In practice, however, individuals would use trial and error

addition to at least one of the other previously mentioned methods of skill acquisition. For example, even though Santhosh AKA Jackbliss spoke about learning and using tutorials during our interview, he also asked for help on web forums, used tutorials, and asked for help and advice from friends. Likewise, Novice used trial and error in addition to tutorials, friends, other FLN videos as examples, and books. While trial and error was highly valued and was expected to a certain extent of CHD members, it was rarely, if ever, the sole method used by some proficient animators.

Chapter 6: What Makes Cold Hotdog Your Community of Choice?



Figure 6 A selection of avatars in the Cold Hotdog forums.

As noted in earlier chapters, there are several existing online multimedia communities as large multipurpose sites such as YouTube and Vimeo which CHD members can contribute. In an examination of one of these amateur media communities (2010), i b X ' U ' I d Y Y f ' V U Y Wc ` c [m ' c Z ' f Y j] Y k ' U b X ' Wf] h] e i Y I ' k \ Y f Y ' g d Y W] U ' I U ` a c g h ' Y b h] f Y ` m ' h \ f c i [\ ' h \ Y ' Z c f WY ' c Z ' g m g h Y a g covering six do-it-yourself (DIY) communities, Kuznetsov and Pa (2010) found ten reasons for participating in such a community: inspiration and new ideas for future projects; learn new concepts; meet people who share similar interests; receive feedback on projects; educate others and share information; showcase ideas and skills; document or archive work; give back to the community; improve reputation and website traffic; and find employment opportunities. Many of the CHD members whom I spoke to in interviews and in the site forums relayed similar reasons for participating in an online community, especially to learn new concepts and showcase their ideas and skills, as discussed in Chapter 4 to improve their reputation and/or website traffic. However, those reasons do not completely explain why they participated in particular

Online multimedia communities have, among other things, different affordances, audience sizes, layouts, community norms, and expectations as to the type of content that is allowed (e.g., some sites allow mature or explicit content, while others do not). community members chose CHD to showcase their work and included the motivations observed by (2010a) and Kuznetsov and Pa (2010) but they also centered on an inviting and encouraging culture (relative to some of the other communities), quality feedback professionalism (in the parts of the community devoted to work and not general chit chat), and The Tourney.

Inviting and Encouraging Culture

One of the sentiments repeatedly reported by community participants is that CHD is an encouraging community. There are trolls and people that trash talk or have only negative things to say. In an interview Tomacco mentioned that the amount of trolling increased after the site switched servers in 2011 and forced everyone to have to register to use the forums. Nevertheless, the overall opinion seemed to be that CHD was more encouraging and inviting than many of the other amateur multimedia. This relatively congenial environment was nurtured not only by community members but by administrators as well, for Surn noted in his interview that he had been contacted by the owner of the website which encourages me to remain loyal to CHD.

This encouragement was most apparent when community members expressed trouble finishing animations whether the reasons were due to other pressures or just feeling inadequate. In those instances, community members would try to push and complete their tasks as in this case where Poster19 tries to do as fast as possible.

i [sic]remember not[sic]long ago[sic]was just like you, making crappy (no offense) animations. With your skills, a little devotion [sic]to making a maybe 300 second animation WITH sound, you could very well get your animation hosted on here, or at least it would get some serious hits on youtube.

Poster19 made the preceding comment after a community member talked about being discouraged by the poor reception of some of their videos. Despite potentially insulting the original animator, saying that they too had started off in the same position, because they had pushed through and found success, so could this animator.

In another instance, during The Tourney, Poster18 decided to drop out because she didn't have time to finish submission. This led to several community members trying to talk her out of it and encouraging her to continue to animate, but a few of them did so in unexpected ways.

Poster18 will probably accomplish a real thing because that girl can do an art i [sic]swear to jesus (Poster20)

Poster18 you were kind and pleasant but [sic]like your art [sic]you are very talented please get the heck away from this god awful place this is not the place to be if you want any kind of good exposure the [sic]just way to humor retards that draw the same dumb (Poster21)

= b h \ Y \ Z] f g h i e i c h Y ž \ D c g h Y f & \$ \ h f] Y g \ h c \ g] a d ` m and will accomplish good things, but in the second quote Poster21 is being complimentary while trying to tell her to get away from the community. Once in a while I would find comments like that in the community, but what if individuals who had received some of these comments

comments seemed to have the reverse effect. There was always that that type of support could not be found elsewhere and was one of the reasons why they chose to be a part of CHD.

To not give the impression that all supportive comments included negative views about CHD or the work of the recipient of the support, here is an example of a positive comment from Post 22:

O Å, please don't drop out! I thoroughly enjoy your animations and part of the fun / challenge of Tournaments is completing your idea in balance with the demands of your life. I burned The Tourney midnight oil in '09 because I had a day job. I'm sure <<name redacted>> the same thing in [08] can be done. You have WAY more free time in college than in the real world, so honor your commitment and bring it home.

5 g '] b ' D c g h Y f %- Ñ g ' W]c r a Y a g ' b k]ž h ' D ' c h g ' h Y ' f & &]' a ' l a h d u f h Ñ g ' d '] competing demands on his time, but he nevertheless tries to encourage the animator to continue. While entreaties such as this were not always successful, the recipients of these appeals overwhelmingly responded positively.

Quality Feedback and Professionalism

In addition to the congenial environment in CHD, members also noted the quality of the feedback that they received there. Novice, in response to a question about why he participated in CHD, simply replied, "I like the feedback." In fact, this notion of quality feedback was one of three of these intentions in their study of DIY communities, however, this notion of professional and/or quality feedback kept coming up in my conversations with CHD members. This suggests that the feedback was good or professional in fact.

people might give you good advice, majority of the feedback is wrapped up in slander and filth. However, community members seemed to stress that the feedback was good overall. This statement from Jimmysanimation, for example, about feedback in the CHD community

really no benefit there, but if you get it from someone in a community or a kind of like apparent that says still gonna be able to do it unless you really work at it or something a little bit of a softer, more constructive feedback I would say from a forum or from a community, that would be from just random comments that you get depending on where you post. But at the same time if you get a lot of glowing comments on YouTube or something help.

While anonymity is not necessarily the source of the hostility on sites (Lange, 2007), this perception that familiarity makes it easier to be antagonistic as opposed to being helpful towards others was common amongst my interviewees. However, in the smaller CHD community, they found that others took time to not only give feedback, but to give useful, constructive feedback.

Members of the community also sought to provide feedback that would be useful in a professional setting. As discussed in Chapter 5, many of the community members would give

detailed design critiques and introduce formal terms and others. This was intentional on the part of members, including the site. He too would provide feedback that would harken back to what [the] U f Y ' `] _ Y ' especially during The Tourney. He had to defend not accepting a submission due to the inclusion of music that was used without permission of the creator:

This also teaches what the real world of animating is like. If there is a copyright issue with a piece of work that is tried before a deadline, it gets scrapped completely. (Admin)

5 g ' b c h Y X ' V m ' B c j] WY Ñ g ' e i c h Y ' U h ' h \ Y ' V Y [] b b] b [' c one of the reasons why individuals frequented CHD.

The Tourney

Finally, a big reason individuals knew about and participated in CHD was because of The Tourney. Most of the individuals with whom I spoke had either participated in The Tourney had observed it during one or more of its previous editions. The Tourney is a summer-based tournament in which animators are paired against one another in single elimination rounds until a final winner is crowned. The animators are expected to create an animation of at least 30 seconds that is based on a theme by the Tourney organizers. They each have the same amount of time to work on their animation, which is judged at the end of the round by a panel of judges based on creativity, incorporation of the theme, adherence to the rules (e.g. length of running time), story, and skill.

During my period of observation, The Tourney was the time during which the CHD community experienced the most traffic. Participation in the forums increased, and the number of views on videos seemed to also increase. This tracked with what most of my interviewees

many of them saw The Tourney as a great way to get more exposure, learn new ideas and techniques, and as remarked by Kouf, to be able to give me a motive to actually animate. Interestingly, these are very similar to some of the motivations for participation noted by Kaz and Paul (2010) to learn, showcase skill, and get new ideas and increase reputation.

An easy assumption to make is that sites that attract continuous levels of high traffic will be more exposed to members, the opposite can sometimes be the case. On a large Newgrounds, because there is so much content, it can be hard to stand out from the crowd. The community is entirely overlooked by the CHD, while it is a challenge to make it to the front page, it is worth the attempt. A few, select videos make it there. And during The Tourney, all of the entries are highlighted and made easy to find. Some videos that probably not have made the front page under other circumstances expect a certain number of viewings and level of exposure during The Tourney.

Another reason to participate in The Tourney is to receive detailed feedback from the judges. During his interview, Jimmy Animation said that one of his primary motivations for submitting his submission was to get a bunch of unbiased feedback. Feedback is typically given in the forums and in comment threads beneath videos published within the community during other times of the year, but during The Tourney, the difference is that at least some of the feedback is guaranteed to come from experienced animators and at least some clout within CHD and in some cases the animation community at large. The feedback can also be more detailed in that judges have to give justified scores that

give. For example, Poster 3 of some points from submission because the facial expressions did not include enough detail:

Started to get a bit preachy, but it ended with a poignant moral, which was great. The characters needed more facial expression, in my opinion. When the animations is that simple a lot more detail can be added to characters without huge cost in the time it takes to animate them. Don't hold back on the artwork!

In another example, Poster 4 that another entry lacked detail in the facial expressions but in the storytelling as well:

There was too much in this story that was never resolved or explored when needed. The significance of Joseph's sprocket that made it so special (over all the other sprockets in the family business) that Joseph would risk his life for it; the bullies who showed up to create a problem and then stopped existing; Joseph is crazy because the bullies said he was crazy and stupid and other things that bullies say I didn't buy it. It seemed more like you were showing that the protagonist is not crazy at all, that he's driven by courage or knowledge or perhaps even greed and that's still a valid use of this theme. But because so little of Joseph as a character was explained/explored, that train of thought just seemed to go nowhere. I simply had to assume that he was just crazy, which wasn't quite as interesting as a more sympathetic quality like bravery or even cowardice. A few more emotions than just "sad" and "fearful" in Joseph's face would have helped viewers relate to him as the main character. We have to get to know him better, to make the story purposeful and engaging.

While this level of detail in the feedback is one of the reasons why many of my interviewees participated in The Tourney, interestingly, one of the few negative comments that I received about H \ Y \ H c i f b Y m \ Wc b WY f b Y X \ Z Y Y X V U W_ \ itzef was not viewed negatively, Surn mentioned that it was sometimes hard to balance what the audience liked and the judges wanted. In the example that he provided me, he chose something that the audience liked despite knowing that he would receive low marks from the judges, suggesting that the critiques from the judges were not always the most influential feedback. The Tourney but that the feedback from the community at large mattered as well.

Finally, The Tourney provided a regular opportunity to actually animate something that k c i \ X \ V Y \ j] Y k Y X \ V m \ c h \ Y f g \ U b X \ h \ U h \ . The i \ X \ g h f Y themes were usually unique and the rounds were time-constrained with a definite start and end time. A few of my interviewees mentioned having problems with time management or finding a sufficient amount of motivation to actually start and complete an animation when it had no audience or purpose beyond just for fun, and The Tourney provided both of those problems. The Tourney had explicit start and end dates for both the rounds and the overall tournament (although sometimes rounds would be extended), there was a sizeable audience h \ Y \ f Y g i \ h] b [\ U b] and had more recognition within the community which would increase as a result of participating. For some individuals, those were big motivations for joining The Tourney.

Altogether, CHD members noted very similar motivations for creating animations in this context for an online community as the individuals observed (2010a) and Kuznetsov and Paulos (2010) yet they chose CHD specifically because of its relatively convivial environment, elevated levels of constructive feedback, and The Tourney. As was probably apparent, these three stimuli are not mutually exclusive. The community climate lends itself to allowing and encouraging

feedback, and participation in The Tourney was spurred for some by the better than
feedback would be received. So, in many ways, these causes for CHD participation reinforce
another.

Chapter 7: Why Do You Continue to Make These Animations?



Figure 17. Screenshots of *the envy of the universe* video. Captured 6 December 2015 from <http://www.newgrounds.com/portal/view/558573>

After getting interested in animation, attempting to pick up the skills necessary to animate, and choosing to participate in CHD, what pushes animators to continue to animate? An easy answer is simply that it is fun, and as conveyed by Tomacco and Blinch during their interviews, CHD is an enjoyable place to spend time with friends and others with similar interests. Level of interest in the community of practice is a strong motivator for continued participation (Wasko & Faraj, 2000). The animating CoP centered around CHD is not different from simple enjoyment and interest. CHD members also credited encouragement from the CHD community, a desire to see their work and attain recognition and status, professional duties, and a need for a creative outlet as other reasons for continuing to make animations.

Encouragement from the Community

As discussed in Chapter 6, CHD is a relatively encouraging community, and when asked why they made animations, several members expressed how important the CHD community members were in encouraging them to continue to make animations. For example, when Poster22 decided to drop out of The Tourney during the summer of 2013 due to school commitments, Poster22 tried to dissuade him from doing so:

you are missing the predicament you are in never goes away (once you are an adult and the "real world") will always have more obligations than time. It's a fantastic opportunity to figure out how to prioritize, but more importantly, how to give 100% to the time you DO have.

if the idea you have takes you 50 hours and you only have 20 hours to work with, think of a new idea that only takes you 20 hours. Just that simple. You have to get creative. You don't have to sacrifice any school or homework time, but you will have to sacrifice most or all of your free time: video games, social activities, and possibly a little bit of sleep. It's going to suck for a while, but you won't be a quitter and you can be proud of your effort, win or lose.

don't frame this up like college obligations are making you quit. If you want to stop, you will. If you want to quit, you will.

you can do this.

This type of encouragement from members serves as both a motivator for participating in C and a motivator for continuing to animate in general. Encouragement did not always come of a direct entry. However, sometimes, the encouragement was simply a comment after a video that stated: "Great work!" That kind of support and the fact that someone had bothered to look at their animation and comment on it leads to the next motivation for participation: recognition and status.

Recognition and Status

In general, both the pursuit and attainment of recognition and reputation or status seem to be big motivators for continued participation in online communities (Oreg & Nov, 2008; Wasiko & Faraj, 2000; Yee, 2006). There was no difference in Cold Hotdog. Many of the community members expressed the desire to get more publicity for their ideas.

There are several ways that status can be demonstrated in Cold Hotdog: through knowledge demonstrations, helping other community members, and/or familiarity with the community and its participants. Members claim to have acquired their animation skills through the different ways that they show their knowledge of Flash and animating. In addition to simply creating and sharing animations, would post tutorials, code fragments, or give feedback in forums in ways quite similar to the way that was observed by Oreg and Nov (2008). The conferring of status was then given by those who used the materials and advice who would then give credit to the authors of such material:

Actionscript wise I learned all of I know from Poster2.
(Poster9)

As for actionscript, I learned some from Poster10. (Poster11)

I learned animation technique from Poster2. (Poster13)

This act of giving credit to others for materials also served as a way for the individuals using the materials to gain status. By mentioning the names of active community members or authors of materials on the site, they were showing that they too were a part

community and they had some of the skills necessary in order to be considered a contributor to the community. This name-dropping performance was not always successful, however. In the following quote, Poster2 successfully tried to give credit to some of the community members for work that they had contributed that he found useful:

I learned my self on my own did some tutorials to make webcam funny things, but most of all the people of chd inspired me, Poster2, Poster10, Poster4 (can't remember the full name) and Poster9 (again can't spell).

Structurally, this statement does not look that much different from the statements from Poster11, and Poster13 above. Poster12, in learning a skill, mentions what materials they used to start in the forums by Poster4, a frequent poster and moderator in the forums. This suggests that just following the template for giving credit to one

had to be at least an intermittent participant in the forums for this method of status attainment to be successful. As discussed in Chapter 5, there are six ways that members profess to have acquired their animating skills: formal schooling, help from friends or through an apprenticeship relationship, online resources including tutorials and messages boards, books and other offline materials including the tutorial tutorials in the Flash software, reverse engineering Flash videos or learning by example, and trial and error. Those who learned with little help (e.g., by reverse engineering Flash videos or using books or tutorials) were more highly than those who took courses or received help from friends

art degrees are bs; anyone with an iota of talent/drive can teach themselves stuff by the info on the internet and get a 'career' going by using this thing called networking + printing software. (Poster3)

pls explain to me what you expect to do w/ your 2d animation degree
am genuinely curious bc i see u are falling for a scam invented by universities to trick idiots into giving them money (Poster31)

While it was not the case that individuals with formal schooling disregard these quotes might suggest a a i b] h m ' a Y a - V U f g \ k l c k N Y F Y d f g Y g X having done so. See Chapter 5 for a more complete discussion of skill acquisition methods.

Professional Duties and an Outlet for Creative Expression

The final two reasons for continuing to make videos are similar but not quite the same. The first of the two is because animating is a profession pursued by how many CHD members that I encountered were working in a creative field either making animations or in tangentially related field like graphic design, media, or web development. For many of those individuals, animating was not just a hobby it was also part of their day-to-day work.

The final reason for continuing to make animations is that it serves as a creative outlet. Creative expression is a way to improve certain creative skills, animating is a way to do this. I've wanted to see the video in Wc a Y g ' i Z f i] h] c b " ' H \ G U h a Ñ g ' U] f h " m ' z = f Ñ g ' Ñ] g X Y U b g " a I U h] c b g ' U f Y ' i g fart of a funny idea [and] [and] out loud on the train on the way to the city for class, [and] then Ok f] h] b [Q '] h ' X c k b ' For these individuals, animating is simply how their ideas are made concrete especially when they have active imaginations:

So ima m' \ Y U X '] Z ' m c i ' g U] X ' g c a Y h \] b [' h c ' a Y ž ' b c h
m c i ' Wc i ' X ' g U m' c f U b [Y ' c f ' g c a Y h \] b [" ' ' = b ' a m'
\ Y Ñ g ' X cM]Ybd[" ' ' g ' hHi \ZUZh"Ñ g ' ^ i g h ' \ c k ' a m' V f U] b ' k c f _

Animators relayed having to quickly sketch on paper, write dialog snippets that came to mind while running errands, or in some instances even creating quick storyboards simply in order to get an idea out of their head and to remember it later. In instances where procrastination, technical limitations, or other reason prohibited an animator from completing an animation, the idea would continue to bother them until they could complete the project.

Freund (2011) found similar reasons for continuing to make videos in the vidding community. There, vidders made videos because of their interest in the source to express their ideas about a media and culture, desires to tell a story that was already being told, to entertain. As with the CHD members, there would almost be a feeling of frustration if the viddler that an idea was not being or had not already been expressed in a satisfactory manner. In these instances, the viddler would take it upon themselves to tell the story.

In conclusion, enjoyment, encouragement from the community, recognition and status, professional duties, and the need for a creative outlet all contribute to the desire to continue producing animations. Perhaps it is no surprise that these motivations are similar to the motivators for beginning to animate discussed in Chapter 4. The only reason for continuing to animate that is different from the initial reasons is professional duty. This difference is found as it is unlikely that one would begin animating as a job duty without having any prior experience, yet

Wc b h] b i] b [' h c ' U b] a U h Y ' U g ' U ' d U f h ' c Z ' c b Y Ñ g ' ^ c V ' ^

While there is only one new motivation for continuing to animate as compared to beginning to animate, it is worth noting the absence of some of the internal motivators uncovered for beginning to motivate from the list of motivations for to animate. At a balance, there

appears to be a heavier emphasis, or at least a greater proportion of the CHD members themselves, on external motivators for continuing to animate as compared to the internal motivators for beginning to animate (e.g., desire for self-development and skill improvement). I did not address this with the CHD community members that I interviewed, however, based on our conversations and my time in the community I can offer three possible reasons for this: 1) it is hard to verbalize internal motivations; 2) internal motivations may have been a part of the external motivations that were expressed; and 3) the sources of external motivations were not present when beginning to animate, so of course they would be mentioned more as a reason to continue opposed to starting to animate.

I witnessed the first explanation for the motivator disparity, hard to verbalize internal motivations, in almost all of my interviews. When I would question the CHD members about why they started animating and invested so much time animating and subjecting themselves to tough challenges after talking more and approaching the subject in multiple ways would some of the underlying reasons, such as a desire to improve their skills or for stimulation, come to the surface. Because of this, I relied a lot of the other content that I collected during this study such as forum postings and the videos themselves for example to bolster those findings. Unfortunately, there were far fewer discussions in the forums that addressed why someone would animate compared to why they stopped animating, which resulted in a heavier reliance on my interviews than I would have liked when it comes to addressing the former concern. As such, that my interviewing skills may not have allowed me to surface all of the internal motivators for members to continue to animate resulting in this motivator disparity.

Another reason for this disparity could be that the internal motivators are mixed up in the external motivations that I note. For example, a desire for recognition and status from

the community could be realized by the successful achievement of those such as improving the level of desire for challenge. One way for a CHD member to know or feel as though they have achieved the level of desire for skill development, for example, is if the community acknowledges and celebrates that achievement. So, while they only recall the motivation and status to me, there may have been more internal motivations present as well.

Finally, the most potential reason for the motivator disparity is simply that there are external motivators present when someone is beginning to animate compared to when they are contemplating continuing. When they are starting, they do not yet have the CHD community on their side, they do not have the relationships that they will inevitably develop once they join the community, and they do not have the professional related responsibilities to fulfill. However, they do have all of those things after they have started to animate within the CHD community. As such, of course those external motivators would have more salience for CHD members at that point in their animating career.

Chapter 8: Lasting Impressions

Figure 18. A comic strip by Santhosh AKA jackbliss entitled *Before and After Marriage*. Captured 18 June 2016 from <http://jackbliss.deviantart.com/art/Beforeand-After-Marriage-388922727>

To conclude, Cold Hotdog is an online multimedia community in which animators acquire skills and share creative artifacts. This case study herein included participation, web content analysis, and structured interviews to describe CHD using the five features of a context within a general participation framework as defined by (2004) location, relationships, content, pedagogy, and assessment. It addressed two overarching research questions:

1. What motivates an individual to move from watching animations to creating them Cold Hotdog?
2. In what way(s) does one acquire the skills necessary to create animations?

Initial interest in animation was sparked in CHD members by cartoons, games, comic books and comic strips, flipbooks, and animated content found in online multimedia commun-

