



Passive Aggression

A new type of game turns Web surfing into all-out information warfare.

Can't devote 30 hours a week to *World of Warcraft*? Try racking up experience points and slaying enemies in the course of your mundane daily browsing instead. That's the thinking behind PMOGs—passively multiplayer online games. Blogfather Justin Hall came up with the concept as part of his master's thesis. Downloaded as a browser plugin, a PMOG adds an extra layer of data and interactivity to the sites you visit. "We're giving people tools to wage information and routing war online," Hall says. "A framework for them to battle and bury treasure on Web pages." Does planting booby traps or tackling missions on Web pages sound like the exact opposite of fun? Think of all those Facebookers happily trading SuperPokes. WIRED asked Hall to describe a potential PMOG experience. —MARY JANE IRWIN

MONDAY 9 AM

1. A user installs the PMOG applet and is awarded 200 data points and an assortment of tools for in-game use. He picks the username Web_playa. A new layer is added to his browser's toolbar that tracks his stats and inventory as he surfs the Web.

WEDNESDAY 9 AM

5. Web_playa is notified that Show_Boat triggered the St. Nick while trying to place mines on MTV.com and lost two data points. Ah, revenge is sweet. In case Show_Boat returns, Web_playa installs a wall around MTV.com that will withstand several rockets.

10:30 AM

2. During a coffee break, Web_playa discovers that his friend Sarah83 posted some embarrassing pics of him on her Flickr page. To retaliate, Web_playa tags her as a rival and sets a data mine that will blast any PMOger who visits the page. Take that!

3 PM

6. During an endless call to tech support, Web_playa completes a few more missions, leveling up. w00t! His character's attributes are Vigilante, Destroyer, and Benefactor, allowing him to store even more mines and other gear in his arsenal.

12:45 PM

3. After lunch, Web_playa checks his MySpace page. Boom! He's leaking data points. Sarah83's ally Show_Boat planted a mine there. Web_playa uses a St. Nick attack, which will detect when they lay another mine and punish their naughtiness.

THURSDAY 1:45 PM

7. Web_playa barbers with ally 1337netmonk to obtain portals, which forge links between Web sites. He can use them to create more missions or, say, connect fellow PMOGers who visit gadget blog Gizmodo to a cool iPhone hack he discovered.

TUESDAY 11 AM

4. While Web_playa is checking hockey scores on ESPN, a lamppost materializes, symbolizing a mission created by another player. A correct answer grants more data points, a badge, and tools Web_playa can use to create his own missions.

FRIDAY 2 PM

8. In the middle of a dull meeting, Web_playa designs a mission for other PMOGers—a puzzle around his favorite episode of *Arrested Development*. He places portals that will take players to obsessive fan sites and Michael Cera's IMDB page.