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Class_08_InitialComments_Farmer

Posted by the **U.S. Copyright Office** on Dec 19, 2017

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Comment

I am Frank Randall "Randy" Farmer, one of the creators of the first graphical virtual world/MMO "Lucasfilm's Habitat" - a product that ended up spawning work that has changed not only the digital entertainment community, but nearly all internet appicliations.

Just one of the many innovations that are decendants of Habitat are the JSON messaging protocol standard, which is used extensively throughout the world.

In Q1 2016, I lead an open-source effort to restore this seminal work because of the tireless work by The Musuem of Art and Digital Entertainment (specifically Alex Handy and his team) to secure the rights to open source the original source code. We were very fortunate that most of the code was available and the company that owned the rights (Fujitsu) was feeling generous.

Not all the code turned out to be available - AOL held the rest, and despite the best efforts of everyone that was trying to restore this project for posterity, US corporate lawyers could never bring themselves to spend the time/effort to get the code (now 30 years obsolete) rights open.

Companies fear the backlash if shareholders learn that someone else "gets value" out of their legacy IP.

Fortunately, we were able to work around the loss by completely re-coding the server on top of the first JSON server that Chip Morningstar and I created and open sourced years ago that used a similar programming model.

I hope you can see that the only reason Lucasfilm's Habitat (http://neohabitat.com) is back is the hard IP work and lucky circumstance of available original creators. Many similarly revolutionary and seminal works will not be so lucky.

We really need to extend this protection to include creating compatible online servers so that the already

exempted client code (program disks, usually) can become fully functional again. A MMO without a server is just rotting bits.

Please feel free to contact me directly if you have any questions about this comment, or my extensive history with multiplayer online games for the last 40 years (I did my first in 1976).

Randy Farmer
Project Lead Neohabitat.org
http://linkedin.com/in/frandallfarmer

Comment ID

COLC-2017-0007-0117

Tracking Number

1k1-9018-69t7

Comment Details	**Submitter Info**

Submitter Name

Frank Randall "Randy" Farmer

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