

High Wired

On the Design, Use, and
Theory of Educational MOOs

Cynthia Haynes and Jan Rune Holmevik, Editors

Foreword by Sherry Turkle

SECOND EDITION

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Preface to Second Edition

Making an object look like what you see is not as important as making the whole square you paint it on feel like what you feel about the object.

—Georgia O’Keefe

Dinosaur bones and cow skulls mark the landscape where we first wrote our introduction to *High Wired* and from where we now write this preface to the new edition (Ghost Ranch, New Mexico). But, while dinosaurs make for fascinating study, they *are* extinct, victims of their inability to adapt to changing conditions. It may be a stretch to liken MOOs to dinosaurs; certainly, MOOs were not in danger of following them into the Paleolithic sunset. Still, as our work on enCore evolved, we knew something radically new was needed to accompany what many of us were trying to paint in words and emotes in MOOs around the world.

Time and change go hand in hand. In the three years since *High Wired* was first published (and enCore released) we have clasped hands with many of our readers and many new players on countless new MOOs. It has been a quiet revolution, just the sort necessary to breed art and language—to create a new hybrid from incarnate words—and to bring forth *Xpress*.

The enCore MOO database now comes with a graphical web-based interface called *Xpress*. As an alternative to traditional telnet-based MOO clients, *Xpress* introduces a new platform-independent mode of access to the MOO, but that is not its best feature. This new interface makes all aspects of using a MOO easier and more convenient. It makes MOO teaching and learning easier, interaction more creative, and creativity more pervasive. Thus, the changes you will see in this edition of *High Wired* are specifically about the addition of *Xpress* to the enCore educational MOO database. You are welcome to try the *Xpress* client at Lingua MOO (<http://lingua.utdallas.edu:7000>). If you want to set up a MOO, you can download enCore with *Xpress* for free from: <http://lingua.utdallas.edu/encore/>

Changes to chapter 5, “Taking the MOO by the Horns,” explain how to configure an enCore MOO with *Xpress*, which will be of importance to MOO administrators and technicians. Plus, an entirely new appendix has been added (“*Xpress*, the enCore difference”), which details how to use the *Xpress* interface and in what contexts it is beneficial (e.g., teaching, collaboration, research, conferencing, and publishing). In this chapter we give an overview of the main components of *Xpress*, with illustrations, to give you an idea how they look.

The remainder of *High Wired* has not changed, nor has its relevance to teaching with MOOs. If anything, *High Wired* has proven itself an indispensable guide for anyone who wants to learn about MOO technology or join a MOO community, namely, all who enjoy connecting to the “faraway nearby.” We attribute its success first and foremost to the authors herein, whose talents and time proved not just how versatile this technology is but also how deeply it affects lives. Second, we owe its success to the University of Michigan Press and our editor, LeAnn Fields, whose encouragement and guidance allowed us to see this project through in the way we had envisioned it. But perhaps most importantly, we owe *High Wired*’s success to our readers and the countless people who have dared to create their own MOO communities with our enCore software and who have spawned hundreds of new educational and professional MOOs serving thousands of users all over the world. We salute you all and thank you for the inspiration you give us to continue to improve upon and expand the reach of MOO environments.

The rest we attribute to Ghost Ranch, to its sweeping beauty and its silent embrace, into which we sharpened our listening until we heard the write images.