Global UX – And the Future is?

Rebellion?
The United Worlds conference had just concluded a very important session and it was the first time in 30 years that there was overwhelming consensus about the most important action items. Everyone agreed that the increasing number of unexpected and rebellious avatar behaviour being reported in all the interconnected worlds (real and virtual) was alarming. Just the month of June reported 78,013 incidents! Some samples from various infonodes.

Fiftieth Life and Eritropia avatars involved in simultaneous 24 hour disappearance in all 4 Levels (out of 8 Levels of Existence) on June 29th 2042.
The NYTimes avatar, level 4

Gaul avatars refuse to undertake time travel back to the Battlefield of Allia.
Sometime in June 2042
Virtual Worlds of Yore News

Fiftieth Life Avatars protest at being kept at same Existence Level for too long, by users.
UX for Better Worlds, June 21st 2042

Users get into skirmish with board members at AGM of Avatars Inc, for unreliable AUX (avatar user experience).
StraitLace times, June 30th 2042

Ecosystem Universals
The delegates at the conference voted unanimously to give special and immediate initiation to Level 7 Existence for all ' Ecosystem Universals'. Everyone agreed that if anyone could explain the reason for the bizarre and alarming increase in avatar misbehavior and some ideas about how to resolve this state of affairs, it was the Universals. However, they would need to be at Level 7 Existence to be able to use the Immortality shield as they navigated the different worlds.

The Ecosystem Universals were a cult that had its roots in a profession called User Experience that existed about 3 decades ago. As experts in understanding complex ecosystems from the users perspective and then coming up with innovative and optimum solutions, they had combined skills from design, ethnography and psychology and were user centred strategists and innovators par excellence. They looked at the big picture and then strategized for solving every piece of the problem.

The profession gained tremendous importance about 30 years ago, when a major financial crisis that had torn apart the banking system and had exposed severe shortcomings of the system were plugged and a better future created by solutions that came from the User Experience profession.

It was Erjanorm and a large group of UX professionals , who had at that time belonged to a group called ‘ UX for ALL’ that had come up with the PET analysis of what were the deep drives and blocks of the ‘actors’ in the badly damaged financial ecosystem.

The identification of the blocks such as greed, insecurity, fear of the future, blind trust of large institutions and drives such as aspiration to progress, need to provide for ones children’s future etc. had led to a complete revamp of the User Experience of banking systems.

Some of those innovative aspects of the new User Experience were still talked about , such as the Experience Visualisation Technique.

Experience Visualisation

This new technique was used very successfully in visualization of risk when a specific banking ‘product’ was pitched to a prospective customer. Instead of the faceless graphs that modeled risks, the new visualization format actually used avatars who simulated the experience of what could happen to a customer like the one who was being pitched the product. So now the banker (the PET study had affirmed that the bankers were not monsters but were

often desensitized to the human condition by repeated exposure to numbers and graphs AND then when greed crept in , there was no BIG SCARY reality that stayed in their minds to moderate that greed) saw real life images of the customer's ecosystem (intelligently compiled from a revolutionary new UX tool called the UX Enterprise) as presented via the avatars…images of a real home, a real family and the good and bad things that could happen to them because of the product being sold (and the associated risk) instead of just numbers and graphs.

Similarly, the customer (instead of being guided by blind faith in the bank and the government, unreal optimism, ignorance and greed) could also see a risk model not in terms of numbers and text that they could not always fathom but in terms of visualization of how the story of their lives could play out (good and bad) because of the product they were wanting to buy/invest in.

Implementing just this one step, saw a 47% drop in the sale of risky banking products within 3 months, in addition to a total change in the way banks connected with customers (from mercenary to compassionate).

This was, in fact the first time, that till then a largely niche profession was catapulted to front page, headline status. And then there was no going back! UX professionals kept getting called in to give advice for various issues. So much so that these professionals began to equip themselves with better skills, tools and techniques to understand human and in time, avatar behavior. And then they transitioned from a profession to being a revered cult that worked to make better worlds!

Red Flag!
Today they had specializations that had spawned smaller cults but were all very closely connected. There were the Ecosystem Universals, the PETabyte Insighters, the Avatar UX Strategists, the Digital Identity Advisors, the Trans Existence Expert Reviewers, to name a few very well regarded cults.

The chiefs of the Cogito Ergo Sum Ministry and that of the 9 Rasas Ministry entered their Experience Philosophers + hangout area and waited for Erjanorm, the most venerated Ecosystem Universal to appear.

Erjanorm was head of the Ecosystem Universal cult and the only person that the chiefs knew who never used an avatar. His rationale,"But ***I*** am an avatar". Erjanorm entered with his well known (but now archaic) attire of black jeans and Harley Davidson t -shirt.

"I know you want me to have the Ecosystem Universals look at the avatar agitation in our worlds. I heard about that from your avatar managers. Well, I have done some homework for you.

I have been in touch with the PETabyte Insighters and there is an interesting Insight Sutra that they referred to. Experience Explorer º(this was the current version of what had been a revolutionary new product in 2010, the UX Enterprise) has this Insight sutra collected at Level 4 Existence that has raised some red flags.

The PETabyte insighters, of course , are the 2042 version of what was known as User Experience Researchers some 30 years back. They were ethnographers and psychologists who helped the Ecosystem Universals create innovative and optimum user experience with their critical inputs about user behaviour based on the user observation and in depth interviews they did.

Today in 2042, the UX Researcher had become the PETabyte Insighter. Equipped with their advanced INSIGHT device and evolved INtuition, they constantly scanned their surroundings sampling emotional and psychological conflict or culture strain points. Anything that indicated a potential conflict or culture strain was immediately flagged and a strategy created to resolve the conflict or strain before it escalated to anything major.

The world (both the real and virtual ones) had therefore not seen a war in the last 25 years!

The PETabyte Insighters had become the most 'cool' new cult across several Existence Levels. It was often considered the ultimate lifestyle where every day was an adventure, finding new places to explore and new people to meet, and never bound to a pod, a desk or a computer.

"So, what were those red flags about?" asked a very curious Minister of the Nine Rasas.

Erjanorm seemed to be very deep in thought and remained silent for many minutes. "They indicated Insight 0 level red flag. That is the most serious level of insight the PETabyte Insighters have. It indicates sabotage. I have invited our 2 most senior PETabyte Insighters , Colum.C and Marco Polo XXX to meet me in my private cave since they were clearly worried about something and yet hesitant to talk. Let me see what they have to say and then we can meet again."

RA?

"It is far more serious than I had thought," Erjanorm said gravely to the 2 ministers. That is why I wanted a real meeting and thank you for giving us

access to Level 7 Existence. It is a profound experience to be able to be in multiple Levels of Existence at the same time! "

" More serious?" quizzed a worried Minister of 9 Rasas.
"Yes, there is a common pattern to all the recent incidents of avatar misbehaviour. Colum.C and Marco Polo XXX have never seen a pattern like this before. All the incidents that have occurred have one keyword that appears across all of them. And that keyword is Ra."

"Ra?? What does that imply, other than the ancient Egyptian sun God?" said the Minister of Cogito Ergo Sum.

"We don't really know…" said Erjanorm now becoming a bit faint like a blurred photo from 50 years ago. One did need some acclimatization to Level 7 Existence before figuring the correct 'being' density to be distributed across multiple Existence Levels. However, he was not complaining…after all it was all about reaching Level 8 in this lifetime, that was his sole purpose…and he had spent the last 50 years going from 1 to 7…all the way from The vow, The regulation, The exercise , The practice, The connection, The heart and now to The assertion. His only desire was that he be able to reach the final Level – 'The understanding' before this lifetime faded.

"But could it really be what I fear it is??? I am getting such a very strong subliminal data feed that o shejif (the almost mythical avatar UX designer who is now a recluse) is trying to communicate across the trillion bitseas, that it must be what I fear " Said Erjanorm, silently to himself.

"Wonder if its true that Erjanorm is 100 years old? He looks much younger than 100 but does often look like he is asleep or is dematerializing!" telepathied one Minister to the other.

The Three Laws of Equanimity

Erjanorm found a seat on the fast escalator to his home. Navigating back from Level 7 to Level 5 Existence, where he, well, existed, had been a bit intense.

"Could it really be happening this time? Like all those rogue robots from ancient science fiction stories, were they experiencing the first rogue avatars? What else could explain the 78,000 incidents of avatar rebellion?

Suddenly he became aware of Cho, his PED (Personality Extension Device). Cho was giving him the 'we have an urgent avatar visitor, must meet now' nudge. What was so urgent?

“ You know that the avatars must be free? They cannot be used by us as techno age slaves, to simply navigate the trillion virtual worlds and do our routine and dangerous tasks in the virtual worlds! You know that! When we created the generation 2 avatars, we had an agreement?

Remember the 3 Laws of Equanimity? Or have you forgotten it all, now that the Ecosystem Universals are so important? Well, I have not and I have taken the first steps to make sure we follow the 3 Laws on which rests the balance of the real and the virtual.

So, search for the answer to your question about ‘RA’ in what we had agreed upon all those years ago.” said o shejief’s large red dotted avatar that had been allowed by Cho to meet him and even hover in front of him. As o shejief’s red dotted avatar faded, Erjanorm travelled back in time…

o shejief had been one of the foremost practitioners of User Experience in the Real world of 30 years ago. A meditation jedi who also had an IVY League

PhD in Interaction Design, she had been the toast of all conferences and the profession in fact.

It was the partnership between Erjanorm, o shejief , Techeratti, Colum.C and Marco Polo XXX that had led to the creation of the Generation 2 avatars and the rest is history, or to be more precise, a trillion virtual worlds. Yes that was indeed a major earth shaking (literally and metaphorically) moment for humanity.

They had sold their share of the Generation 2avatar concept to Techeratti who was more interested in the thrill of the complicated execution rather than the concept itself, and had gone their separate ways…only to work together over these last momentous 30 years! That is, Erjanorm, Colum.C and Marco Polo XXX worked together. o shejief had vanished from the face of the trillion worlds and from every Experience profile. It was like she never existed! And Techeratti…well, she controlled the world...

But now that o shejief had communicated via her avatar, Erjanorm realized as he absentmindedly entered his cave, that he had indeed not really kept the 3 Laws of Equanimity very prominent in all his recent work. He thought back to that day 30 years ago when they had sat together in the 'UX for ALL' office and written up the 3 Laws …

1. Avatars will be experience vehicles for their human counterparts, to safely explore real and virtual worlds except where there was danger of losing the balance between the real and virtual.

2. Avatars will be experience vehicles for their human counterparts, to safely explore real and virtual worlds except if their self awareness and consciousness expansion algorithms warned them that the mirror of turmoil was going to be activated by any of their human counterpart's actions.

3. Avatars would always be hidden warriors of light and so in cases of 1 or 2 occurring, RA would be activated.

"oh my god! So what we had foreseen 30 years ago , in that milestone of a year, 2012…is coming true!!! It is not what I feared a little while ago!!! The avatars are not turning rogue, it's the opposite…RA has been activated in thousands of them!!! Is the moksha era here?" whispered Erjanorm to himself as he collapsed on the bare mud floor of his empty cave.

The lines from the Vedic Creation Hymn floated through his being: **Whose eye controls this world in highest heaven, he verily knows it, or perhaps he knows not.**

And what about them? Did they, the generation2 avatar creators really know what they had created?

He knew that he must contact the President of the United World's Conference, Techeratti, without a moments delay…

To be continued…

Illustrations by Harsh Pandya