

## **Khitomer Conference 2021**

# Constructs of a Simming Community

*Host: Radamere ([Pegasus Fleet](#))*

*Room Two • Session 3*

**Radamere 2/20/2021, 12:02:01 PM**

Greetings everyone

**[IDF] Charles Star20/2021, 12:02:09 PM**

This sounds interesting!

**Radamere 2/20/2021, 12:02:43 PM**

Just a little bit of introduction about me. My online Handle is of course Radamere, although the Pegasus Fleet folks will know me either as Thompson or Warrington.

I have been apart of the simming community now for 11 years and I have a background in youth and childrens work within the community, as well as extensive experience in managing and running online groups.

As such this is a topic that over the last year has become even more important to me. So. Without further ado.

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Welcome all. This session will be part discussion based and part lecture format. For the next hour I want to look at the role our online simming communities play for our social well being, as well as how we can do more as well as WHY we must do more.

There will be spots for questions as we go.

I think it is safe to say, for the vast majority of us, the last year dealing with the Covid Pandemic has tested us in ways we never expected with many aspects of our daily routines looking like they may have been permanently changed. One of the most complicated consequences has been the impact of the last year on our mental health, as people found themselves without their normal social support networks, regular distractions and of course the increased financial uncertainty many faced.

As the world reeled under the initial shock almost a year ago, as it transpired, those best prepared were communities like those we are a part of. The simming communities and gaming clans guilds or whatever badge they wear, were already years ahead of the game. Since as far back as IRC, even email groups, the prevalence and reach of online communities have grown and while everyone else fumbled and

bumbled their way around zoom, skype and the many other Video conferencing programmes that have shot to the front we have had our own discords, websites and activities running in some cases for decades.

In a lot of places, even today, the community centre has always been the vessel for which people gathered for various activities, met and socialised, learned and supported each other. For us, Discord/IRC/Our fleet infrastructure are all our community centres. In each group we share artwork, we teach each other how to write better, we talk about our favourite shows and we discuss the news, and even occasionally politics. And while we are each there for one or two core activities, (The sims we write on) the centre is where we all mingle and ties us together in some way. Today is in all intents and purposes. An online road trip.

Speaking personally, I don't have a lot of people I would call up to go out, pandemic or no pandemic, to do something with. Truth be told. I don't like people. I don't like noisy places and I have a tolerance for being social after which point, kindly go away. However over the years through the various games and groups I've been a part of I have made more friends than I think I ever would have doing it the socially normal way. I have good friends across the globe who share different interests and have allowed me to be a more globally aware person and for me, while I will not dismiss the vast important of the local brick and mortar community building, the online Communities we exist in is what keeps me sane, positive and moving through whatever is going on.

So. For our first bit of discussion. I want to ask you all what activities do you do in your own fleets?

**[OF] Emu - Fawkes/Loki/Acad 2/20/2021, 12:08:57 PM**

As in personally, or what activities are organised?

**Radamere 2/20/2021, 12:09:14 PM**

Both

Just anything you can think of

**[PF] Amethyst 2/20/2021, 12:09:54 PM**

We don't have a whole lot strictly organised... but we've broken into random games of Among Us or Cards Against Humanity...

And it's always been fun 😊

**RedBird 2/20/2021, 12:10:03 PM**

With UES just starting, we are still growing in this aspect. Some of the things we do is just general chatter in the discord, share a few memes, and are just kind of there for each other on a personal level.

**Draxx - CO Andromeda 2/20/2021, 12:10:06 PM**

Monthly quiz

**The Doctor 2/20/2021, 12:10:08 PM**

We share pictures of our cats. What else is the internet for? 😊

**[OF] Emu - Fawkes/Loki/Acad 2/20/2021, 12:10:18 PM**

Personally am in charge of the Academy and looking for more ways to engage the community in that aspect of teaching each other everything we know and love about Star Trek (and would love some input there)

and an amazing one at that

**Radamere 2/20/2021, 12:10:32 PM**

Relaxed banter. We like

What about the most obvious activity we all do?

**RedBird 2/20/2021, 12:11:17 PM**

Ohhh Among Us - the ending of so many friendships :p

**[OF] Emu - Fawkes/Loki/Acad 2/20/2021, 12:11:34 PM**

same with Cards Against Humanity, tbh 🙄

**[PF] Amethyst 2/20/2021, 12:11:35 PM**

We talk. A lot.

**Zhanyt Lafizatar 2/20/2021, 12:12:00 PM**

118 has a lot of gaming taskforces, and generally, a lot of chatter in the main room. That said, it also is a faster pace, so usually I imagine most fleet activities are finding fun things to do in sim (goal is 3/wk, for sims.) as an example. I've had to rely on it as a bit of way to not lose my ability to talk to people.

**[PF] Amethyst 2/20/2021, 12:12:01 PM**

We listen to each other, we talk, we celebrate successes, offer comfort.

**Draxx - CO Andromeda 2/20/2021, 12:12:02 PM**

Talk, joke, share pics of what we are cooking

**The Doctor 2/20/2021, 12:12:04 PM**

Ah yes. We plot to get our characters into predicaments. I had one of my characters lose an arm and that was discussed via discord.

**[SC] Reece 2/20/2021, 12:12:10 PM**

We have a CAH channel on the SC Discord server lol.

**[SC] KyleB 2/20/2021, 12:12:22 PM**

LOL we do... its crazy

**Radamere 2/20/2021, 12:12:25 PM**

Do any of you yeno? write and tell stories?

**[OF] Emu - Fawkes/Loki/Acad 2/20/2021, 12:12:39 PM**

Only occasionally 🙄

**[SC] Reece 2/20/2021, 12:12:41 PM**

what's that?

**[PF] Amethyst 2/20/2021, 12:12:41 PM**

Why would we do that? 😊

**[SC] KyleB 2/20/2021, 12:12:42 PM**

I think we occasionally share bits of fic and such

**Radamere 2/20/2021, 12:12:49 PM**

Are we just really online book clubs of self published authors?

**Draxx - CO Andromeda 2/20/2021, 12:12:56 PM**

Not heard of yeno

**Zhanyt Lafizatar 2/20/2021, 12:13:06 PM**

I'm really terrible at it, but occasionally I like to do mock "your sim is now a hollywood show, let's see how the "producers" mess it up" or funny CYOA stuff like that when people play along

and that's really my only storytelling

**The Doctor 2/20/2021, 12:13:18 PM**

Indeed.

**[OF] Sepandiyar 2/20/2021, 12:13:21 PM**

of varying degrees it feels like.

**Zhanyt Lafizatar 2/20/2021, 12:13:37 PM**

I mean, I doubt I'll ever be good enough or confident enough to publish anything. I get my writing urge out via sim communities

**Radamere 2/20/2021, 12:14:09 PM**

You might not publish it, but your crew read your posts, and so do other people going through the sites

**[OF] Cam 2/20/2021, 12:14:19 PM**

I am honestly better at plotting than writing, so tossing ideas around is great for me

**Zhanyt Lafizatar 2/20/2021, 12:14:41 PM**

hm. is pbem still publishing? I guess it would be.

Point, then

**Radamere 2/20/2021, 12:15:06 PM**

So lets think about these activities

Has it ever occurred to you that that weekly scheduled game of Among Us or the monthly quiz might be the only social event someone attends that week or even month?

Or perhaps, what we consider idle bantering around in our general channels might actually be the only conversation someone there has with anyone?

Or even the writing itself? The educational value it has in learning punctuation, grammar, spelling and all the rest?

**[OF] Emu - Fawkes/Loki/Acad 2/20/2021, 12:18:29 PM**

I have a player that's using it to improve fine motor skills after brain damage.

**The Doctor 2/20/2021, 12:18:41 PM**

It's about the only socializing I get, so yes. I've considered it a lot. Being on the autism spectrum means that I come off as awkward and cold in person. Online, it's much easier.

**[OF] Emu - Fawkes/Loki/Acad 2/20/2021, 12:18:48 PM**

Never underestimate the power of a cooperative, creative, exercise 😊

**Zhanyt Lafizatar 2/20/2021, 12:19:00 PM**

I have, which is why I've increasingly stopped talking on many discords. >\_>

**Radamere 2/20/2021, 12:19:16 PM**

I think we mostly do all get it and understand that

And I believe that's why we as communities put so much effort into keeping people involved and trying to work with people as much as possible

**[OF] Cam 2/20/2021, 12:19:50 PM**

I having hearing issues, so chat like this is much easier for me than in person talking

**[OF] Sepandiyar 2/20/2021, 12:21:11 PM**

what was that?

**October 2/20/2021, 12:21:47 PM**

The collaboration aspect is definitely one that keeps the mind healthy, especially when we're quite literally stripped of most social situations are the moment. Between continuous cooperation in a group setting, maintaining and building relationships, and honing our creative writing skills, I find it highly therapeutic in a way.

**Radamere 2/20/2021, 12:22:19 PM**

I would agree with that entirely.

Our fleets and the community they provide are so incredibly important, and it's so vital to so many of us that we continue to look after each other and support each other

**October 2/20/2021, 12:23:10 PM**

Facts

**Radamere 2/20/2021, 12:24:29 PM**

Generally speaking. Those who have answered above are on the same rough train of activities that their fleets provide. So this next part is a little bit of a challenge for us all, and also an opportunity for people to say "It'd be nice if this was a thing."

October feel free to keep writing and drop your message in

**October 2/20/2021, 12:25:59 PM**

We become a tight knit family and that definitely becomes a powerful coping mechanism. We can rely on one another to be relatively evergreen and static in ways that RL is not. We're used to this degree of separation between ourselves and other players. It sort of becomes a buffer and segue into separation from our RL co-workers and families.

**Radamere 2/20/2021, 12:28:24 PM**

So as we look at our games of among us, our quizzes and our general chitter chatter surrounding the occasional bit of writing. We need to have a think about inclusivity. What can we do to make what we do, easier for everyone to be a part of. I'll give you an example to get us thinking. I'm an EVE online player. Our big fleet battles revolve around massive volumes of vocal fleet commands and instructions. We have had several players over the years in my groups who are completely deaf

As such we had to adapt and we had people who acted as human relays, typing down every instruction for those players to follow. They even developed a short hand over time

So what are some things and ways we can do to make our scheduled activities more accessible?

(psst. That's your cue)

**[OF] Emu - Fawkes/Loki/Acad 2/20/2021, 12:32:09 PM**

Plan them at times that they are accessible across different time zones

**RedBird 2/20/2021, 12:32:12 PM**

I think something you touched on and another participant hit was the persons that are deaf or hard of hearing. Maybe they don't have the technology to do voice chatting or unable to due to home life - We have to be mindful of that as a community. I think to times in Among Us with friends when someone couldn't get into the voice chat to hear what was going on, so we switched to the in-game text chat.

**Radamere 2/20/2021, 12:32:49 PM**

Yea thats a perfect point

**[OF] Emu - Fawkes/Loki/Acad 2/20/2021, 12:33:21 PM**

To that same point in regards to quizzes, make sure that there's enough time to allow for people to respond and don't have it rely on someone's ability to type fast.

**Radamere 2/20/2021, 12:33:26 PM**

Not only do we have to think about accessability in terms of what our players can do, but can they afford the game or activity or equipment.

What about the rounds in quizzes? I love music rounds.

But that might not be a great round for some people

**Draxx - CO Andromeda 2/20/2021, 12:34:39 PM**

We haven't actually run a music round tbh.

But we're thinking on it so what you have just said is something to consider there

**RedBird 2/20/2021, 12:35:28 PM**

I am a hobbyist in Twitch streaming, so when I want the community to be involved I try to play Free To play Games, Browser based games, or like Jack Box Party where I pay for it and everyone else can play as my guest.

**Radamere 2/20/2021, 12:35:48 PM**

Yep there are a lot of free group games

Amethyst mentioned cards against humanity earlier

**[PF] Amethyst 2/20/2021, 12:36:07 PM**

We did Cards Against Humanity online one night...

**Radamere 2/20/2021, 12:36:11 PM**

And in community work, free is good.

**[PF] Amethyst 2/20/2021, 12:36:23 PM**

a bunch of us did voice chat but it ended up being text chat because we were laughing too much to talk

**RedBird 2/20/2021, 12:36:31 PM**

CAH is great and the website is fairly decent to do it online.

**[SC] Beth 2/20/2021, 12:37:13 PM**

We have a bot in our group for CAH with its own channel. It's nice because some of us have joined in voice chat while others preferred only text.

**RedBird 2/20/2021, 12:37:56 PM**

Now, I will point out you do have to tailor the cards to your community. The cards can be offensive to some, so content warnings, etc.

**Radamere 2/20/2021, 12:38:27 PM**

Yep always something worth considering

Age ratings as well

**RedBird 2/20/2021, 12:38:45 PM**

Yes



**Radamere 2/20/2021, 12:39:12 PM**

As an interesting sort of tangent

For those fleets who do allow under 18's in. We have to always be very careful about child protection. And so we need to make sure all our public channels are safe and accessible to them

The last thing we want is for a young person to feel uncomfortable on our services or taking part in one of our activities, and it falls into the same wider net of inclusivity, that what we organize should be safe, it should be as inclusive as realistically possible and of course. enjoyable

**RedBird 2/20/2021, 12:41:49 PM**

Agree.

**[OF] Capt. Phoenix Lalor 2/20/2021, 12:43:07 PM**

fine for someone who may not have a time limit. Giving a 50 question quiz in an hour.... kinda cramps things

**[OF] Emu - Fawkes/Loki/Acad 2/20/2021, 12:43:52 PM**

Who says you need 50 questions to make a fun quiz? Who says you need to do it within the hour? 🙄 Those sound like self imposed parameters

**Radamere 2/20/2021, 12:44:16 PM**

So. While it's clear from our chat here today a lot of fleets are doing quite a bit to help out their members socially. But I want to stress this quite heavily. A communities social work is never done. We need to be looking for new needs within our groups, we need to be continuing to support the needs we already address while teaching the community as a whole to be self reliant on those fronts (Allow leaders more time to help with new issues) and we need to not get comfortable.

**[OF] Capt. Phoenix Lalor 2/20/2021, 12:44:21 PM**

@RottenEmu then i wont see you in an hour and 15 for the trivia. The hour was not my parameter

**Draxx - CO Andromeda 2/20/2021, 12:44:31 PM**

We never put a time scale on it. Did the quiz for as long as folk want to play

**Reminder 2/20/2021, 12:45:04 PM**

*This is your 15-minute warning*

**[OF] Emu - Fawkes/Loki/Acad 2/20/2021, 12:45:37 PM**

We're talking about the broader community driven efforts. Not specifically Khitomer. Also, the other point stands, there's no necessity for 50 questions in that timespan.

**Radamere 2/20/2021, 12:45:37 PM**

There is a certain arrogance within communities where we fall into the same old rut and pattern of doing things because we have found something that works and to that end we think we have it covered. And in that arrogance we will quickly find ourselves missing opportunities to help those without our communities who need it

**[OF] Emu - Fawkes/Loki/Acad 2/20/2021, 12:46:08 PM**

and as I love trivia quizzes I'll most definitely be there 😊

**Draxx - CO Andromeda 2/20/2021, 12:46:22 PM**

@Phoenix Lalor I'm hoping too as well

**Radamere 2/20/2021, 12:47:23 PM**

Our communities as so so so crucial to many peoples mental health. And as the world continues to learn from us and copy us, we need to keep growing ourselves

I find it funny to think back on how many times parents or friends said, "Go outside and make some 'real friends'."

And yet we have been so well prepared

So let's not been complacent. Let's not pretend like we have this online social world sorted. Because to be frank, we do not. And even worse. We never will.

**[OF] Capt. Phoenix Lalor 2/20/2021, 12:48:59 PM**

no pressure huh

**Radamere 2/20/2021, 12:49:29 PM**

Online communities I believe will see a surge in the next few years

**Draxx - CO Andromeda 2/20/2021, 12:49:32 PM**

Not a scooby @Phoenix Lalor your gonna be awesome

**Radamere 2/20/2021, 12:49:44 PM**

Whether is groups like ours or general gaming clans

this year has shown the world what we have works

And so to each of the community leaders here please keep thinking about how to be a socially active and responsible community.

To end. I want to open the floor for ideas. What would you folks like to see in your fleets. What activities would you like? Would you like different road trips like this? Would inter fleet competitions be something folks might want to try and if so doing what?

How can you fleets generally. Be better.

thats another tag everyone 😊

I've got one myself. I'd like to use voice chat more. I know it doesn't work for everyone. But I like to chat while I'm playing games.

**Reminder 2/20/2021, 12:55:05 PM**

*This is your 5-minute warning. Consider moving the conversation to the appropriate overflow room.*

**RedBird 2/20/2021, 12:55:30 PM**

I mean generally, we have to look at our core. Do our policies and procedures provide for an inclusive, accessible, and safe gaming environment. As someone that likes more of the administrative background things - this is always my focus.

**Zhanyt Lafizatar 2/20/2021, 12:55:58 PM**

yeah, voice chat helps a lot in bringing people together

the issue is you need to moderate it

**Radamere 2/20/2021, 12:56:29 PM**

Yes and no. My eve groups use voice 90% of the time and theres little ot no moderation

**Cara Letsul 2/20/2021, 12:57:16 PM**

My computer doesn't always cooperate when it comes to chat.

**RedBird 2/20/2021, 12:57:39 PM**

We don't moderate the voice chats. If people want to use them, go for it. What you say is subject to the rules of the organization. So it can be reported and/or recorded.

**RedBird 2/20/2021, 12:58:12 PM**

If administrative staff is around, of course they can take actions to disconnect you, move you to a new room to have a private talk, etc.

**Radamere 2/20/2021, 12:58:14 PM**

Has anyone ever thought about a staff member whose role is to organise (Not necessarily plan but schedule at least) their community events?

**RedBird 2/20/2021, 12:58:21 PM**

Yes.

**Zhanyt Lafizatar 2/20/2021, 12:58:32 PM**

118 has no voice chat because they didn't actually have moderators, but I suppose the flip side makes sense too

(this was after the voice chat began generating near constant reports, to be fair.)

I guess voice chat depends on where the fleet is then

**RedBird 2/20/2021, 12:59:00 PM**

UES has a Public Affairs people that is community building, recruitment, etc. I also assist in this as more of a liaison between the fleet leadership and members.

**Zhanyt Lafizatar 2/20/2021, 12:59:18 PM**

I think having people who organize events actually helps a lot

it stops people from proposing ideas and then never being prodded to actually do it

**RedBird 2/20/2021, 12:59:38 PM**

^ yes.

**[16th] Kate, GM Langley Station 2/20/2021, 12:59:45 PM**

[@Radamere](#) I got that. Someone who helps organise OOC events. Like writing games and such.

**Radamere 2/20/2021, 12:59:51 PM**

Yep

**[16th] Kate, GM Langley Station 2/20/2021, 12:59:53 PM**

And welcoming people who join the server.

**Radamere 2/20/2021, 1:00:03 PM**

I understand having it as a support role like aaron said

depending on your fleet that might work

but I know for us recruitment and personnel is one hat

**[16th] Kate, GM Langley Station 2/20/2021, 1:00:27 PM**

I have it for my sim. Not on a fleet level.

**[22] greenfelt 2/20/2021, 1:00:28 PM**

I couldn't agree more.

**Radamere 2/20/2021, 1:00:43 PM**

In youth work

I do talks and seminars and sometimes when you ask for volunteers you get crickets

However if there is someone in charge who can go to someone direct and organise. stuff gets done more often

**RedBird 2/20/2021, 1:01:29 PM**

As a former HR Manager at a big-box retail, I take community/employee satisfaction and happiness as a key task of the Personnel/Recruitment process. Happy people bring in more happy people 😊

**Radamere 2/20/2021, 1:01:44 PM**

If it works for you happy days 😊

Look folks. That's all from me. A quick TLDR

Appreciate and look after each other. Your communities are vital to your members. Continually be better and never settle with how you are now. Keep growing. And keep being awesome.