

The Real Nature of the Emerging Attention Economy:

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Attention Economy:
Seen As a New Level in the
Massively Multiplayer Game
Known as Western
Culture

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An Economy Most Generally.....

is a massively multiplayer

SINGLE-LEVEL game

that involves some kind of passing of

scarce entities

between players

so as to knit all players intricately together

Economic History Is a Multi- Level Game

First Level

FEUDAL

800-1200

2 Levels

FEUDAL

800-1200

MARKET-MONEY-INDUSTRIAL

1650-1980

3 Levels

FEUDAL

800-1200

MARKET-MONEY-INDUSTRIAL

1650-1980

ATTENTION
ECONOMY

3 Levels

FEUDAL

800-1200 [1]

MARKET-MONEY-INDUSTRIAL

1650-1980 [20,000]

ATTENTION ECONOMY

[30,000,000,000]

TPI coefficient of Economies

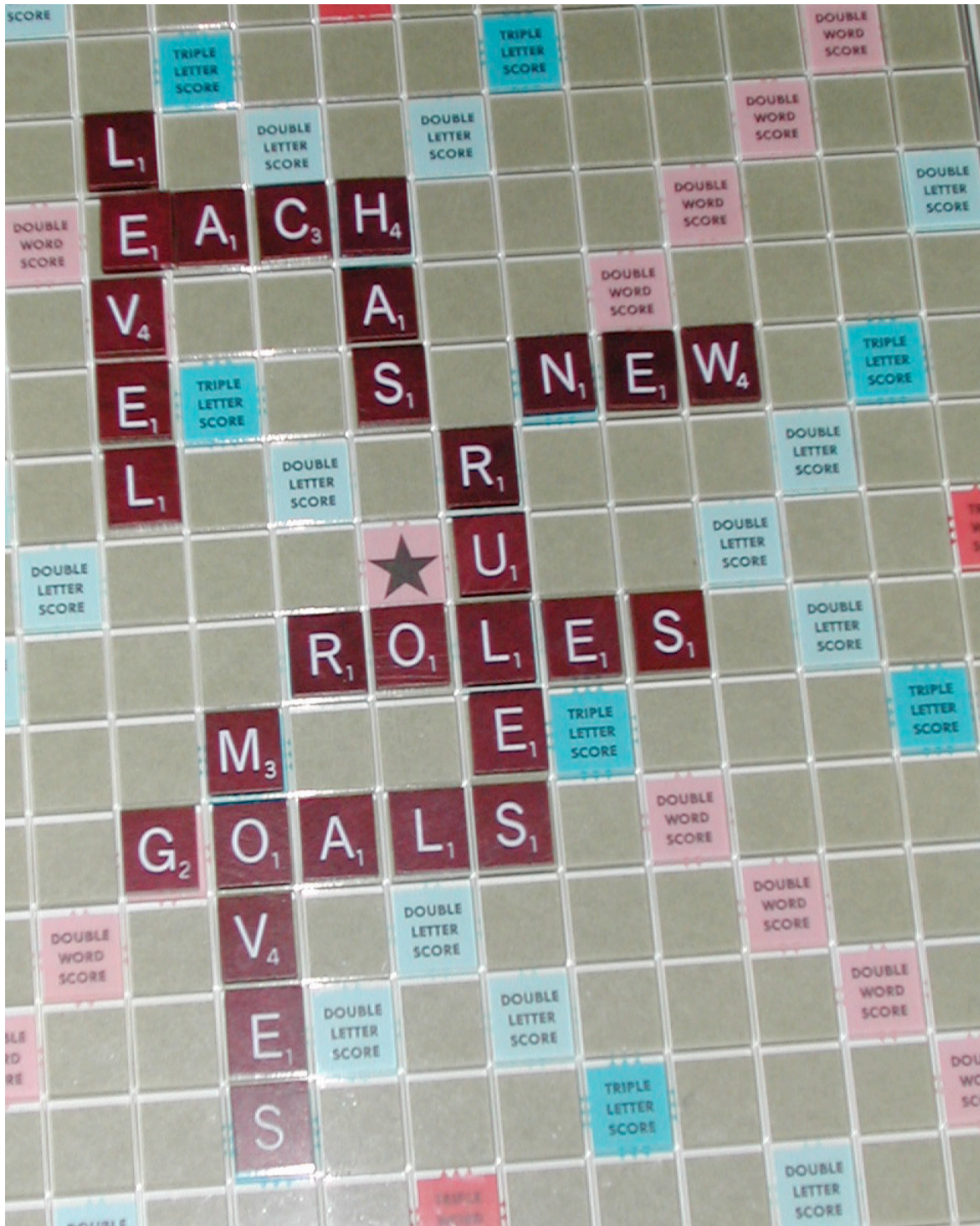
Transactions per Lifetime \times
Pool of people Interacted with \times
Intensity of Interaction

When do we reach a new level?

**When enough of the players in
current level reach their (implicit)
goals.**

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current level reach their
(implicit) goals.**

That is, by success, not by failure.



Each
new level
has
new
“rules,”
“roles,”
“moves,”
“goals,”
(and
values)

BT

THERE IS NO GAME
DESIGNER



New level game emerges from...

- basic human proclivities,
- capacities
- and inventiveness
- in environment created by prior level,
- and its lacks,
- openings,
- partially utilized capacities
- oversights
- and limitations

2 changes of level

Feudal ➡ MMI	MMI ➡ Attention Economy
Success: Security	Success: Material abundance
Openings: ungoverned cityspaces Safe travel; Mostly no slavery	Openings: High school; Broadcasting; Publishing Internet

2 changes of level, cont'd.

Feudal ➡ MMI	MMI ➡ Attention Economy
Lack: material goods	Lacks: chance to get attention; Personal uniqueness, self-expression
Affordances: Monasteries and the technology they created	Affordances: “Info-tech” consumer goods

Aspects of 3 Levels

<i>Goals (scarcity):</i> Loyalty, Feoffdoms Security	<i>Goals (scarcity):</i> Material goods, money, jobs	<i>Goals (scarcity):</i> Attention from others
<i>Roles:</i> Knights, Serfs	<i>Roles:</i> Owner, Worker/Consumer	<i>Roles:</i> Star, Fan
<i>Moves:</i> Obtaining feoffs by winning battles, pledging loyalty or marriage	<i>Moves:</i> Organizing production, selling at a profit, working a job, Buying at a good price	<i>Moves:</i> Performing, Creating Seeking an audience, Paying attention

Cycles and Structure

FEUDAL	MMI	ATTENTION ECONOMY
Vassals → Battles won → More vassals	Work → Earnings → Goods & Capital → Profits → More Capital	Attention → Memory → More Attention
Each serf has one lord	Each worker has one employer	Each fan has many stars

II.

WHAT IS
ATTENTION?

Or, how does attention work as an economic entity in this new kind of economy?

Key points about attention

A. It is scarce, and always will be.

B. It is very desirable.

C. While having only one body limits how much food you can eat or how many cars you can drive, nothing limits the amount of attention you could absorb, if you could get it.

The penumbra of “paying attention” includes:

Heeding, listening, seeing, etc., doing what is wanted, serving, waiting for or waiting on, recognizing, reputing, honoring, granting meaning to, deriving meaning from, learning, etc.

Paying attention amounts to temporarily (and thereby permanently) allowing another to shape how your mind works.

Is Attention about Money or is it
about Time?

Short answer:

NO

Who owns your attention?

Right now, in part, I do.

And, if you are paying attention now, I will continue to own some part of your attention, until you get senile.

Sorry.

We can think of having attention as owning a kind of property. This property is located in the minds of those who have paid you attention.

Finding meaning in life comes from
sharing meanings with others.
That can only happen if you get
some of their attention.

What is “being productive” about?

- A. Being productive means being able to increase amount of attention one gets.
- B. Since total attention *per capita* is limited, net productivity cannot rise beyond a certain point.
- C. Developing new tech tools is largely about seeking stardom in geekdom

How Much Attention Can You
Expect?

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Suppose you do the attention equivalent of writing one book a year

How Much Attention Can You Expect?

Suppose you do the attention equivalent of writing one book a year.

And suppose everyone “reads” one “book” a year.

Then

The average “book” will have one “reader.”

In actuality, we can pay attention to more, say even 300 books per year.

So the average audience you can expect is 300 for your year's work.

NOT
the next Google!