BEHIND THE PIXELS

FIRST ISSUE!

COLLECTORS ITEM!

Introduction to the first issue (By Mark)

Hello and welcome to the first issue of **'Behind The Pixels'**. This magazine has been created to give you some interesting behind the scenes content. Each issue will feature interviews with various staff members/developers/herbivores, preview upcoming features and spotlight the development teams that work tirelessly to make Habbo an exciting world of endless creative possibilities. I'll also be looking at some of our past projects and talking about how they came out (I'm still trying to find the mythical video that contains the pilot of the Habbo TV show that was to air in Finland).

Fan sites will receive the articles first, a few days early, in an omnibus edition before they are slowly published on the current Habbo websites. If the response is positive, we may continue publishing these omnibuses in the future, perhaps on the sulake.com site, but that hasn't been decided.

In this week's issue, I'll be talking about how I became a Sulake staff member and spotlighting the development team known enigmatically as **'The Fatalistic Lemons'**.

Before we jump in, a little about myself and my role in the company. I've worked for Sulake for over ten years and during that time I've worked in both customer service and moderation, and I've been a Hotel Manager twice, once for Habbo UK and again, most recently, for Habbo.com. I moved to Helsinki, to work for Sulake proper in 2005, and since then I've been a part of numerous development and marketing teams. I also wrote a script for the Habbo Animation shorts, but it was passed over as it was a "hideous combination of The Matrix and the Garbage Pail kids". Ho hum.

Right now, I hold the position of Senior Copywriter, which means it's my job to double check text keys before they're added to the website. I'm attached to the User Engagement Team with Mikaela (AKA Neja, former Hotel Staff for Habbo.com), and we're currently working together on some in-game activities for a new Horse promotion (see below!).

Okay, that's it from me. I hope you enjoy these glimpses behind the pixels.

Mark: Oh look! A horse with wings!
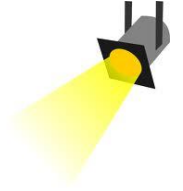
Spotlight: The Fatalistic Lemons

They call themselves The Fatalistic Lemons and their manager is a guy called Lauri who's always smiling. The name of the team is one of those jokes that stops being funny as soon as it's repeated, but here goes: Lauri was discussing with his boss what the name of the team should be, to which his manager said "Just don't call it something bizarre like Fatalistic Lemons." Lauri, being the creative and funny guy that he is, knew instinctively that The Fatalistic Lemons was not just a good name, but a great name, and the rest of the team eagerly embraced it.

The team's focus is on creating interesting content and Furni for Habbos. Rather than building frameworks or structures such as the navigator, inventory or landing page, their area is in Furni and items Habbos can use to get more out the game.

The team is made up of 8, including Lauri who's the Producer. There are two graphic designers, 3 coders (both server and client side), 1 tester and a scrum master. The scrum master is the person who arranges the daily meetings and acts as the facilitator of the agile development process our teams use.

Over the last few weeks, the team has been working on the new Horse Furni items, and the ability for horses to jump over obstacles – these should be available in countries in the next two weeks or so. The horse jumping was in the original plan for horses but was dropped early on, however, when the team saw that Habbos really wanted it, it was re-added to the project.

The typical process for the team starts with a brainstorming round, where they look at user feedback on previous features, and think about what items would benefit all Habbos. The team then begins concept work on their feature/Furni, which includes sketching outlines of the items and their mechanics (for the horses, this included watching videos of horses walking, which is probably less fun than it sounds). After this, there's hallway testing, which is where other departments take a look at the sketches and concepts and comment on them. After this, the real hard work begins – coding and designing to make the features a reality. Following few more iterations and testing, the team is finally ready to pilot. After the pilot, they look at feedback from Habbos and see what needs to be fixed and improved before releasing the feature to all Habbo sites.

So what's the team working on now? Lauri was as tight lipped as ever, he would only say that it was interesting, and still in the process of development, the project was **growing** slowly, but they were **crafting** something truly special.

Interview with **Painimies** (a lover of Furni) out….

TOMORROW!