

# Designing with Dissonance

## Navigating Immersion and Embodiment in Online Larps with Co-located Characters and Remote Players

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### Abstract

Online larps have recently grown in popularity and see players acting over video and text communication platforms to play their characters in real time. These games often use the medium as a diegetic space and are written with the assumption that both the players and the characters are interacting remotely; the characters communicate through video calls, radio signals or text messages to match the distributed nature of the players. However, a number of online larps do not employ this strategy and instead have the players operating remotely while the characters are in the same location. This article explores the challenges and possibilities of creating online, immersive games where there is dissonance between medium and activity and how games can retain immersion and embodiment. By using physical and digital artefacts, augmenting the environment and generating creative ways to interact with those spaces; designers are able to create meaningful, engaging games.

Keywords: Immersion, LAOG, larp

### 要約

最近人気が高まっているオンライン LARP は、プレイヤーがビデオやテキストの通信プラットフォーム上で行動し、リアルタイムでキャラクターを演じるというものである。これらのゲームでは、メディアをディジェクティブな空間として使用し、プレイヤーとキャラクターの両方が遠隔でやりとりすることを前提に書かれていることが多い。キャラクターは、プレイヤーの分散した性質に合わせて、ビデオ通話、無線信号、テキストメッセージなどでコミュニケーションをとる。しかし、オンライン LARP の中には、このような戦略を採用せず、キャラクターが同じ場所にいながら、プレイヤーが遠隔地で活動するものも少なくない。本稿では、メディアとアクティビティの間に不協和音がある場合に、オンラインで没入型ゲームを作成する際の課題と可能性を探り、ゲームがどのようにして没入感と体現性を維持できるかを検討している。デザイナーは、物理的およびデジタル的なアーティファクトを使用し、環境を拡張し、それらの空間と相互作用するための創造的な方法を生み出すことで、意味のある魅力的なゲームを作成することができる。

キーワード：没入感, LAOG, LARP

## 1. Introduction

In 2020, following the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a growth in players who would normally play their games together in physical spaces having to play online. Many of these players wanted to experience the levels of immersion, embodiment, and depth of storytelling that they experienced in the physical space while being limited by social distancing protocols. Though similar games existed prior to the pandemic, this drove an expansion in the number and variety of online games that were played. Included within this was an increase in live-action role-playing games (larps) played online.

Initial research into larps consider experiences within the physical space. However, much of these theoretical underpinnings can be transferred to online games. Bowman (2017) defines larp as "...an embodied experience where players enact characters in an alternate setting." Tychsen et al. (2006) describe

larps as games where players "...physically portray their characters...." Within larps, players are expected to become their character in a way that is more physical and embodied than they might in a tabletop role-playing game (TRPG) where some amount of time is spent explaining what the character is doing rather than enacting it. Though it is possible for players to embody and physically portray their character while interacting online, there are certain actions and experiences that cannot be replicated. For example, players cannot touch other players nor are they able to share an environment and become affected by the light or heat of a room. However, players still share experiences, interact with each other primarily as their characters and spend time building relationships rather than building worlds and settings. Thus, this paper will primarily use *online larps* as a way to discuss using the digital medium as a viable means of experiencing larps.



Live role-playing games with distributed players have been played before 2020 under a number of different names. In 2018, Geek Initiative Larps ran *Hellfire and Happiness*, a digital larp with occult themes set in the regency era (2018). In 2019, the Golden Cobra Awards for freeform larp included a category for Live-Action Online Games. In the same year, Gerrit Reininghaus published “A Manifesto for Laogs – Live Action Online Games” – a design guide on writing and facilitating live roleplaying games for the online space (2019). Reininghaus argues for understanding these games as being unique in their design and execution. There is also a history of larps conducted through letter-writing – often referred to as epistolary larps – a format that works remotely but does not necessarily require participants to have an internet connection. Reininghaus in “Three Forms of LAOGs” (2021) proposed several different methods for presenting: the diegetic call, the metaphorical call and the invisible call. Within this, we can understand the role of the video call as part of the game. Within the diegetic call, we understand the video call as existing within universe - players are communicating through means where the characters are also communicating remotely. Within the metaphorical or invisible call, these play less of an important role – within the invisible call the fact that the players are remote is ignored and within the metaphorical call, the call exists as symbolic of another situation.

We are going to focus specifically on the distinction between those games where the players are remote and the characters are also remote, and those where the players are remote but the characters are co-located. Within Reininghaus’ diegetic call, we can understand that the larp is taking place via some kind of remote communication: whether this is an actual video call or, for example, wizards communicating through portraits as in *Wizards in Portraits* (Fry and Muxworthy 2020). *Ministry of Media and Art* (Seregina and Dixon 2021) is a dark satire game about government employees in a post-Covid Britain, who must navigate the world of bureaucracy and art. In this game, budget cuts have meant that all of the player characters are working from home and thus are communicating via videoconferencing software. This matched the experience of the players themselves – conducting their game via videoconferencing software. When larps seek to combine player embodiment and a diegetic medium, they can add immersive experiences with different interaction methods. *TANKERS* by Sarah Cook (2021) involves players lying down blindfolded and communicating via voice with each other and an AI – while their players would be lying with no sight and separated from one another in pods floating through space. Thus, the medium of interacting via voice call is diegetic, exists within the game world and is the tool within which the larp is conducted. The benefits of utilizing the environment and medium to support the narrative are well-

documented and are common among both larps and other pervasive games (Mcgonigal 2003; Jonsson et al. 2006). By incorporating the medium into the narrative, designers are able to use the features of the technology as methods to augment the story. For example, by using phone calls and voicemails as a means to disseminate puzzles or making it a feature of the character that they always forget to unmute to aid in the interactions with the technology.

However, there are online larps where the players are remote but the characters are co-located – meaning the characters are physically in the same location as one another. In *The Nautical Trench* (Dixon and Marsh 2020b), the characters are tackling a submarine disaster. This game utilises the platform Discord which allows for users to servers that contain several channels that can either be used for text communication or voice and video communications. Players may move independently between these channels. From the moment the game starts, players act as their characters moving around virtual rooms. These video channels have names such as Engineering Room and Navigation Room, and players may use correspondingly named text channels to view information about the environment of each room, which may be interacted with using a text interface. *Meet At The Tavern* by Omen Star follows similar principles (2020). Players take on the roles of adventurers gathering in a tavern before embarking on a quest. Although the characters are in the tavern together, the players are not. The game uses a variety of Discord rooms in order to facilitate the players moving between these rooms and roleplaying that they are within the tavern. This is also done through the use of avatars. *The Barbeque* (Diewald et al. 2012) is a character-driven larp adapted to be used within gather.town – a proximity videoconferencing platform where players control avatars that are able to move around a virtual space and interact with each other.

Within these games, there is a necessary mismatch between the world of the game and the world of the players. This mismatch is often explored in other immersive technologies. Social Virtual Reality seeks to bring physically separated players together in a physical space. VRChat, Rec Room and Mozilla Hubs are all services allowing players to exist in the same virtual world while remaining in separate physical places, and a significant amount of research has been done to study the experience of co-presence within these settings (Sanchez-Vives and Slater 2005; Schwind et al. 2019). When it comes to online games, Reddy (1993, 285) indicates that a misunderstanding of the nature of communication can lead to attempts to use technology to provide “faulty solutions.” To create a game which offers immersion despite players not being co-located, it is important to have both an understanding of the digital

platform being used and an understanding of the experience of communicating through it.

In this way, the dissonance between medium and world presents a design challenge for larps – how do you design immersion into a situation when you cannot replicate the world? We present this article in the hopes of examining this question and whether physical presence is necessary when characters exist in the same physical location.

We will be using the term “co-located” and “remote” to discuss the distinction between when players are in the same space or when they are in separate spaces. This article will explore the different methods of allowing for engaging with immersive games where players are physically distant while characters are co-located. Both authors have experience creating and attending online larps and we will be using strategies learned from our experiences as well as considering the current literature on designing for immersion. For some players, the cognitive dissonance of being required to interact as their character while they are using a digital medium may be too much. The lack of social cues and face-to-face interaction may create insurmountable difficulties in communications. However, for many, there are ways that both individual players and game facilitators are able to manage this mismatch and this is what this article will explore. We will examine this by first exploring some of the design features within immersion in online larps and then propose some design considerations.

## 2. Design Features

Within this section, we will consider some of the design features that can be built upon when understanding online larps. We will look at four particular experiential qualities of larps: immersion, embodiment, presence and flow. Immersion to look at the modes by which players enter a game world; embodiment to look at situations where the character is the dominant reality; presence to look at the environment as the dominant reality and flow to understand the game-led experience of immersion.

**Modes into Immersion** – Immersion is a design feature that players and designers often aim for within a larp (Salge et al. 2020). Experiences and definitions of immersion can vary widely. The state of feeling “immersed” in an experience can refer to situations from being immersed in a good book to experiencing high fidelity virtual reality. Language around larp often talks about “escaping reality” and “transporting” players to new worlds (Helton 2019). In this way, feeling immersed in a larp often relates to feeling like one is fully present and embodied within the game world, within the character and within the moment. Additionally, we can look at immersion as the medium’s capacity to build realistic or authentic

experiences. In this way, we will be discussing immersion as relating to the modes into an experience whereas we can understand flow, embodiment and presence as relating to the experience of immersion (Oh, Bailenson, and Welch 2018).

Bowman (2017) defines six modes of immersion that can be used to understand developing immersion within a larp. *Immersion into Activity* relates to using both representational and embodied mechanics and using physicality to engage with the larp. *Immersion into Game* describes the ways that players can be sufficiently engaged with the risks and triumphs of the game of the larp and engage through the ludic nature of the larp. *Immersion into Narrative* describes the ways that the unique nature of a larp and the storytelling and narrative told within it allows for players to become immersed within. *Immersion into Character* describes the ways that players adopt the character and perform and experience the game as that character. *Immersion into Community* explores how we must understand immersion within social contexts where immersion can be understood as multileveled with characters’ interaction with the social group, the community of the larp and the gameworld itself. Finally, *Immersion into Environment or Realism* describes the ways that the environment of a larp can be created to replicate that of the environment within the game world. There is often a focus on larps in building 360 degree realism (Waern, Montola, and Stenros 2009), referring to how everything surrounding the players can make the players believe that they are in the gameworld and how reality can be used as a tool to influence the narrative.

By understanding Bowman’s modes into immersion, we can see that online larps of the remote player/co-located character nature must necessarily design with some level of dissonance. They are neither able to replicate the environment nor the activities necessarily. However, although there is one less mode of immersion to pull on, there remain modes into player immersion and we are able to concentrate on facilitating the different modes into immersion which can still be drawn upon.

**Embodiment** – Embodiment relates to our perception and how it is experienced through the body. How actions that occur proprioceptively (with relation to our body) can affect our mind and experiences (Gallagher 2005). It can affect the way we perceive situations and how we learn and make judgments from experiences based on how we have bodily experienced a situation. In roleplaying, to embody a character relates to our state of having the character as the foremost reality of the self or to enter the world and reality of that character and being able to express that character (Christensen, Jørgensen, and Jørgensen 2003).

As well as affecting the player's ability to enjoy or immerse themselves within the game, we can also use embodiment to understand how roleplaying as a character can have a transformative effect on the players. Bowman (2015) defines the concept of bleed as the experience for roleplayers of when "real life feelings, thoughts, relationships, and physical states spill over into their characters' and vice versa". In this way, we can see how the experience of existing and acting within an experience can have an effect on the player. Kemper discusses the notion of how, with direction, agency and steering, embodiment can be used for decolonization and transformative purposes (Kemper 2020). In this way, player are able to take active measures to take experiences from a game into their out of game lives.

Embodiment and how players can enter into the world of a character and be thus affected by it in turn thus plays an important part in how we understand remote players/co-located characters larp. In some situations within online larps (such as those with physical avatars), there is an element to which it becomes more difficult to fully experience the larp in the same embodied way that you might with a physical larp. However, players are still taking on the character for themselves and there are still opportunities for them to enact the character and to understand the world as to which the character might understand the world.

**Presence** – A final prominent design feature of online larp to consider is presence: "the feeling of being or acting in one space even when one is physically situated in another location" (Schwind et al. 2019). This has been well-studied within virtual reality but is less studied within the realm of larps. The feeling of presence within virtual reality relates to whether a participant is able to feel that they are situated within the environment, whether they feel engaged or involved and whether they feel some sense of realism within the environment. This is an interesting challenge – within virtual reality it is possible to conduct a series of actions that are not as possible within typical text- or video-based communication online. For example, participants are able to pivot their body to face other people, they are able to receive haptic feedback through their control and they are able to experience sound in a binaural fashion: where different noises are at different locations in relation to the participant location.

This is also explored through notions of co-presence – how can we make people feel like they are socially co-located with others while they are physically distant from one another (Oh, Bailenson, and Welch 2018). Many larps are driven through relationships as much as they are immersion into the game world. Because of this, the feeling that players are, to a certain extent, located in the same place as others is important. It also relates to intimacy –

whether participants feel like they are connected to others within a larp (also systematic review but maybe find another link). However, when elements of communication are removed, this can affect some people's feelings of intimacy.

In this way, understanding presence is uniquely important for understanding larps where players are remote and characters are co-located.

**Flow** – The concept of "flow" can often be seen as an experiential state of immersion. The experience of flow relates to a loss of time perception, ability to focus on singular tasks and a loss of self-awareness (Csikszentmihalyi 1990). We can see flow as the ability to be involved in and affect the game whereas presence is existing within the world (Michailidis, Balaguer-Ballester, and He 2018). In this way, we can look at the game elements of a larp and see how we can involve a player within this.

By understanding the relationship that immersion has with the flow state, we can also look at strategies to create flow states within larps. For example, Flow can be created by building in achievable yet enjoyable challenges and minimizing distractions. This allows people to experience a sense of being intrinsically motivated to do a task while being able to singularly focus on it. In this way, people are able to find themselves immersed in the activity. This can be a particular problem within online events where the internet can offer a wealth of distractions – from getting distracted by work activities and notifications to concentrating on one's own face on the computer screen.

### 3. Design Strategies

In the previous section, we discussed several modes and experiences of engagement in online larps. For the next section of this work, we will consider methods that can be used to augment immersion when there is a dissonance between tasks/environment and game. Many of these design practices will persist for both in-person larps and online larps which use the diegetic call medium.

Steering is an important concept to understand when considering how players and designers can facilitate their understanding of an online larp space. In this way, players may decide to act in a way to preserve the coherence of the story despite that not aligning with what the character might do (Montola, Stenros, and Saitta 2015). This can be particularly important in situations where there is dissonance between game elements. In an online larp where characters are co-located, they may decide not to do certain actions to not interrupt the game flow. Two players may decide to not have their characters hug in an emotional moment but their characters might instead make a heart with their hands.

**Collaborative Environment Building** – In larps, players are understood less as passive consumers of games, and have an active role in creating the gameworld (Salge et al. 2020). Within online larps, this is especially relevant as the environment the player creates and that which the designer creates are two separate spaces. The responsibility of a designer lies within adapting the platform to create a game space and creating a gameworld and frameworks. In online larps, players have a certain amount of control over their personal environment. This is situated in ideas of presence and immersion into environment: how can we allow the virtual environment to become the dominant reality. In this section, we will explore methods of immersion into environment which can be facilitated by organizers and by players.

Crafting an aesthetic to a digital space can serve as a proxy for physical set-dressing or costume, aiding immersion and ease in feeling at one with the game world. Examples of this include using custom maps and art in platforms such as SpatialChat or gather.town to communicate surroundings in a fictional physical space. Both of these are video-conferencing platforms which make use of a background image or images behind the participants, which can be moved around and sometimes even interacted with. Even using a platform with a relevant colour scheme or layout can help, however. *The Nautical Trench* was played on Discord, a digital platform with a visual design reminiscent of no-frills computer programmes such as you may find on a submarine (the game’s setting).

As well as the appearance of a digital medium, channels or breakout rooms can usually have their names customised to reflect the space which they represent. Something as simple as naming a channel something characterful can help a player to feel more comfortable within a digital space, and more inclined to view it as somewhere tangible for them as well as their character. In *The Batcave* (Reininghaus 2020), the platform allows players to turn their screens upside down thus replicating sleeping bats. This is a simple strategy which can encourage players to view their character as separated from their self and begin to move in new ways to reflect that.

When it comes to actions which cannot be properly replicated through a video call, there can be alternatives to narrating such as stating “My character does this” or “this situation appears like this.” Though this can be effective in describing an environment, it can often distract players from their state of presence within the world. In *The Nautical Trench*, for example, characters interacted with an in-game computer by opening a website designed to reflect the appearance of an old-fashioned computer terminal. This allowed the players’ experiences of physically sitting in front of their computer to meld with their characters’

experiences of sitting in front of a terminal, strengthening their embodiment in a situation which otherwise would have destroyed it. With creative use of digital mediums, online games can use their platforms as a strength, crafting experiences and spaces which would not be possible in a physical space, enabling immersion and embodiment in situations beyond sitting at a computer.

Players also have a certain amount of control over their personal environment. Within in-person larps, it is the facilitators’ responsibility to alter the environment to create the immersion. However, in online larps, the responsibility usually lies with the players. In *The Nautical Trench*, players are told that they are in control of their own immersion and they can manifest this within their personal environments. For players with the resources, this can mean changing the colour or brightness of the lighting in their rooms. However, players can also adjust their position with regards to the webcam. Having camera angles persist between a work setup and a game environment may mean that players see themselves on screen as their work persona when they want to see themselves on screen as their character. In this way, embodying a character can be as much about bringing the player out of their environment as inviting them into the gameworld. In addition to this, having a webcam gives players some control over the angles in which they are perceived. Players are able to have some control whether they are seen from a high angle (so the other players are looking down on the player) and are thus seen as weak or vulnerable or whether the player positions their camera for a low angle shot (so the other players are looking up to the player) so that the other players may be able to perceive the first characters as being in a position of power or status over the other player.

Once players have set up their environment, it is possible to use costumes and objects as anchors within the games. Objects do not necessarily have to be props related to the game but they are items for players to interact with that are not simply interacting with their computer. Reininghaus (2019) suggests finding anchors to use within the physical space. This will allow players to have some anchor to the reality of the gameworld within their own surroundings.

There is also the possibility to use objects to anchor oneself to a character rather than an environment. In the game *UPLOAD* (Dixon and Marsh 2020c), players were posted a series of objects that they had to interact with throughout the game to reveal their character’s identity. *Nimble Things* (Dixon 2020) also uses objects in order to help connect players with their character during pre-game workshops by asking them to use them as character-building prompts. In this way, players had elements of those characters as physical objects that they could reflect on in their own physical space. This gives

players the ability to bodily interact with objects where they may be interacting with the rest of the game only through the computer. Giving players ownership of their character's costume or allowing them to have props such as tankards, necklaces or wands that represent elements of their character can help them within the embodiment of that character. Some players use specific perfumed scents to represent different characters or clothing with specific textures. When there are certain elements of the character costume or objects that they interact with that are specific to the game or the character, this can help bring that character to the forefront and aid with embodiment.

Making the most of this high level of control can create an atmospheric and immersive environment. It is also possible within online larps to have more of a control over the sounds within a larp. *The Nautical Trench* and SparkLRP's *Thread* (2020) are both accompanied by soundscapes all players are able to tune into throughout the game. Players are able to simultaneously react to sound happening in the game as if they were in the same physical place, because they hear the same audio at the same time as each other. We may describe such worlds as these games create as heterotopias (Foucault 1984) – spaces which exist beyond and separate to their physical space – in the case of online larps, organizers and players co-create a world in which only the characters physically exist, but which still affect the players in a very physical way. They find themselves embodying the characters within their fictional world, but also embodying them within the real world, where the character does not theoretically exist. Hearing a sudden noise naturally provokes a reaction, and cements the world as accessible to the players, despite appearing to them only through their headphones. In this way, soundscapes, soundtracks and sound effects can be used to facilitate a blurring of the fictional and real worlds, crossing the boundary between them and inviting easier passage for players.

**Minimising Disruption and Distraction** – In addition to considering tools that can augment elements of the environment to serve the story, we can look at the ways that we can remove barriers that exist between the player and the game such as distractions that exist in the world of the players but not in the world of the character.

Many online platforms used for larps such as Discord and Zoom allow players to use a text chat in addition to voice and video. In many cases, players are able to use text channels to communicate off-game information while they use the voice and video channels to communicate in character (Piancastelli 2020). In this way, in games where the characters are in the same location, they are able to retain the mannerisms of their character while still communicating necessary information about the

environment, wellbeing and things the character may be signalling. *A Thoroughly Respectable Larp* (Clare and Tommis 2020) is a regency-era larp where players can use the text channels to indicate elements of their character such as who they're dancing with and whether the dancing is passionate or disinterested.

This is closely related to many of the dynamics of creating the state of flow. In addition to techniques providing a sense of ownership over character and space, there are elements that may help players reduce distractions that might interfere with their ability to stay in character. For example, facilitators might suggest that players close tabs that aren't related to the game. Designers can ensure that players have to navigate a minimum amount of platforms to be able to access the game. All of these mean that a player has fewer barriers between themselves and experiencing the game.

**Utilising the Technology and Medium** – Within videoconferencing platforms, there are often other means of communication that players can use in addition to video calls. Within video larps, text can be used as a secondary communication platform to communicate off game information. Commonly used in physical larps, roleplay effects are a tool which can also be used in online games to facilitate embodiment. A roleplay effect is typically an emotional, mental or physical effect which is communicated to a player out of character, and which affects their character. This could be as simple as informing a player that their character finds themselves inexplicably angry, but could also be more complex. Roleplay effects can be a useful tool in helping a player who is struggling to engage with their character to approach the game in a new light.

In an online larp, receiving clear direction on things that are affecting the character such as elements of the environment can help the player to engage in the game. When given a certain emotional response, for example, a player tends to consider their body language, tone of voice and so on - embodying the new effect and, therefore, their character.

Roleplay effects were used in this way in *T67: Survival Night* (Dixon and Marsh 2020a); players interacting over a video call were periodically given roleplay effects which, as well as progressing the plot, served to provide support to players who may be struggling to engage with their character and the gameworld, and to inject drama into already highly tense situations.

Utilizing the text medium also gives players a way to calibrate off game with other players. In this way, someone may say something over voice chat that is in character but then send an off game message asking their fellow player if they are comfortable with the level of intensity. It also allows players to have multiple documents open where they may wish to

refer to game documents or translation software if they are playing in a second language. However, this must be carefully managed. Some players may feel overloaded if there are multiple streams of information that they must concentrate on in order to engage with the larp.

It is also possible to further utilise the technology to augment games. In a write-up of *Meet at the Tavern*, players advise using lag and the sidebar in the videoconferencing platform as a way to keep track of activities happening in the game (Harold 2020). In *After Dark* (Holkar 2020) players simultaneously have their cameras and microphones on while communicating via text.

**Spatial Chats** – Videoconferencing systems such Spatial Chat, gather.town, ramb.ly and Mozilla Hubs, make use of an interactive environment and proximity audio to create an experience more similar to that of physically being present in a space. There have been online larps on these platforms: *Qualia* (Devald Kyhn and Hvidbjerg Poulsen 2020) ran on Spatial Chat using a custom map with multiple rooms, and *The Barbeque* runs on gather.town.

The freedom to move around without the binary choice of entering a breakout room or a new channel gives players the same opportunities for roleplay that they would be familiar with from games run in a physical space: for example, proximity audio allows for eavesdropping on conversations, and the feeling of peril when having a secret chat which you know may be overheard by somebody close by.

Fluid movement around a space also helps players to engage in conversation more naturally than with other videoconferencing platforms. Conversations are able to break off into small groups, meld back into large discussions and both lose and gain people without being broken up by actively splitting into different channels. In this way, participants can find that much of the social behaviour that they would be used to within a physical space could be replicated within the digital space.

Conversely, spatial platforms can also better support players who may find online communication overwhelming or difficult. Players can easily move away from a situation which becomes too much and control the volume of conversation around them by adjusting their distance from it. Additionally, it becomes easier for players or designers to identify somebody left on the edge of conversations or not engaging, as individuals will be present in the space rather than absent from a list of users in a channel.

Spatial platforms do not work for everyone: they can be taxing on the internet and computers; do not always support mobile devices and come with their own access issues. However they can facilitate a mode of social interaction close to offline spaces,

and in a socially active game this makes interaction more instinctive.

## 4. Conclusion

In this paper, we discussed online larps where players are remote and the characters are co-located and how we can produce immersion and embodiment within these situations. These larps produce an interesting tension for the genre. When creating a dissonance between medium and game, players and designers must create strategies for creating immersive games. We propose several ways that designers and players can work together to build this world: through collectively creating an environment, through anchors to the game world, through minimizing distractions and disruption and through building in future technology into the work. The medium of online embodied roleplay is still young. Within this article, we have not been able to cover many of the social elements that provide for good play within online situations such as structuring, creating characters for deep relationships or telling compelling stories. Furthermore, understanding immersive dissonance in larps is not simply an important notion for online larps. To provide “fully immersive” scenarios with authentic props, environments and costumes requires a great deal of resources compared to those that require some element of imagination. Thus, understanding how immersion and engagement can be built in dissonant scenarios such as online larps allows us to understand immersion within different contexts.

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