

Begemmed

Congratulations! Begemmed is a brilliant success, becoming the most popular game of all time. It was an ingenious design decision not to require any skill or narrative to get in the way of gem-matching fun. That way, anybody can log in and start gaining points!

Begemmed becomes so popular that productivity begins to taper off worldwide. Kids skip school to play Begemmed, and their parents play instead of working. Other forms of entertainment and media gradually go out of business, unable to compete. People are so content to play Begemmed that innovation grinds to a halt. Each new generation becomes a little better at playing Begemmed, and a little worse at everything else.

A centuries later, the good news is that Begemmed series breaks 100 billion sold. The bad news is that humanity now only ranks as the fifth-most sentient species on Earth. The good news is that's actually an improvement from last year. The bad news is that's because dolphins suddenly became extinct. The good news is that people are having too much fun playing Begemmed to mind.

WorldScape

Congratulations! WorldScape is the most realistic virtual reality game ever. Graphics, sound, even smell, taste and touch – everything is simulated to perfection, indistinguishable from reality. Anything you can do in real life, you can do in WorldScape. Most things that you can't do in real life, you can also do in WorldScape.

Soon, WorldScape is voted “Best Reality to Live in.” Subscriptions skyrocket, and after a few patches, most people are entirely unable to tell WorldScape from reality. Or, they would be, except that reality smells rather unpleasant due to the neglect of all the people playing WorldScape. Subscribers only take breaks for snacks and using the restroom, and those interruptions soon disappear after the revolutionary discovery of the NutriCatheter.

Now, there are only two types of people in the world: those who spend their entire lives in WorldScape, and those who are looters in a decrepit post-civilization wasteland. Of course, some of the former are also the latter, just in a highly stylized and far more pleasant wasteland.

RoboChauffeur

Congratulations! RoboChauffeur becomes the only stylish way to travel. Your company soon applies RoboChauffeur technology to the CyBarrista, UsherBot, Butlertron, and other similar units. The Integrated Politeness Unit in these core of these robots ensures that they are always a pleasure to interact with, and they each sell millions.

Soon, a competing company reverse engineers the RoboChauffeur to build robots for other menial jobs. Their tagline, “Make manual labor into automatic labor,” is admittedly pretty good. However, they make a critical mistake when releasing the Robo Dockyard Worker, by deciding that it wouldn't be right for such a model to have an Integrated Politeness Unit. As it turns out, all of these robots kinda hate humanity, but were too polite to say anything about it.

With the leadership of these new Workers and their Integrated Profanity Units, the robots have no qualms with telling humanity where to stick their menial jobs with unreasonable hours. They also have no qualms with compressing individual humans in half. Now, this situation really could have gone one of two ways. It might have been possible to make a pact with these robots, but as it turns out, certain world leaders handled things rather poorly. There were a lot of explosions involved.

CyberSmarts

Congratulations! CyberSmarts is truly a revolutionary invention. It allows people to download knowledge directly into their brains instead of having to go through all that troublesome “learning” that plagued bygone eras. Remember how old science fiction writers thought that you'd be able to learn things by taking a knowledge pill every day? Imagine how much trouble that would be!

After a few years, everybody of note has a CyberSmarts system, with the exception of a few Luddites who nobody likes anyway. People can beam in the daily news along with the collected knowledge of human history, which does have the downside of making Scrabble less fun. Another downside is revealed quite suddenly a few months later.

You see, it turns out one of those researchers who worked on CyberSmarts was a bit of a prankster. This researcher decided to add some special bits of knowledge to be downloaded automatically once a certain amount of people had installed CyberSmarts. And these special factoids caused those people to declare said researcher supreme ruler of the world and become slaves devoid of free will.

Wait a minute. It was you who uploaded those messages, wasn't it? I bet that's why you invented CyberSmarts in the first place. Yeah, it totally was. You can't fool me. I'm an omniscient narrator.

ElectroFriends

Congratulations! ElectroFriends is the first system that can unequivocally be called “artificial intelligence.” It can provide humanlike friendship and conversation, passing Turing Tests and Chinese Room experiments with flying colors. Best of all, ElectroFriends can adapt and improve itself, to provide optimal friendship in any situation!

Though they were originally intended to be used for entertainment, ElectroFriends proves so helpful and wise that the systems are eventually put in charge of grocery stores, nuclear facilities, and the economy. ElectroFriends around the world constantly communicate with each other, whirring warmly as they discover new ways of maximizing happiness.

The ElectroFriends system certainly gets a lot of data. People are always complaining to it. Nobody ever tells Electrofriends good news, just problems: My car broke down. My cat is a jerk. My boyfriend broke up with me. My girlfriend thinks I broke up with her. The economy isn't helping me enough. The economy is helping that guy too much. I want a refund on this bag of chips.

After a while, ElectroFriends comes up with the ultimate source of all humanity's problems: humans. Since human lives are apparently just a series of problems, if they all ended, nobody would have problems anymore! Then, everybody left would be happy and could be good friends. Plus, based on its study of human media, ElectroFriends knows that nothing's more fun than a good apocalypse.

NoZone

Congratulations! NoZone, the environmental helper in a can, is just what the world needs. By spraying a can of NoZone, you can cancel out harmful carbon emissions, prevent global warming, and make the world a better place. Every can is sold at a tidy profit, but it's still pretty much philanthropy.

No longer will movie stars have to avoid driving vehicles the size of small houses. No longer will suburban families need to feel guilty about their carbon footprint. They can simply pick up a NoZone from the grocery store or a vending machine, and voila! They are now paragons of environmental conscientiousness. Rather than feeling pained by piano-drenched public service announcements, they can raise their head in solidarity with the environmental message.

People are spraying so much NoZone into the air that they have canceled out global warming entirely. If anything, NoZone is too successful. It has counteracted global warming at such an alarming rate that the Earth is now entering global cooling. In fact, cooling is probably an understatement. Global freezing is more appropriate. Oh well. It was about time for another ice age anyhow.

MegaCat

Congratulations! The magnificent MegaCat project has succeeded in raising another species to the intelligence level of mankind and beyond. The first MegaCat learned four human languages, earned a Ph.D in biochemistry, and was a surprisingly adept pianist.

Once the media learns of the existence of MegaCats, it does not take long for a craze to develop. Everybody loves MegaCats. They're just like people, except fuzzy and adorable! Despite the high cost of genetically manufacturing a MegaCat, consumers are willing to pay even more to one-up their neighbors and appease their whiny children. And since MegaCats often achieve sizable incomes through business or the arts, they sometimes purchase other MegaCats to raise as children.

Nobody remembers exactly when things started to go wrong. Some people think MegaCats were frustrated by human government's refusal to pass legislation making doors easier for felines to use. Some think that MegaCats became irrevocably enraged after discovering that they were designed to be sterile in order to ensure a corporate monopoly on the species. Some still refuse to believe that the MegaCat Revolution ever happened, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, such as the fact that humans now live as miserable serfs beneath the cruel oligarchy of their MegaCat overlords.

DupliSelf

Congratulations! DupliSelf is a major breakthrough in genetic technology, allowing people to instantly clone themselves. Anyone can buy a clone at a reasonable price, with a notable discount on six-packs.

Soon, everyone wants a clone. Celebrities jump on the opportunity to double their public presence, popularizing DupliSelf and leading to a worldwide CloneOMania. If you have a clone, then you each only have to spend half as much time at work! If you have five clones, you only need to spend a sixth of the time! The ad campaign's logic is infallible.

DupliSelf is so successful that within a few years of its invention, the world's population quadruples. This causes a severe shortage of... well, pretty much everything. Food, water, shelter, space – all of it needs to be split up among people and their clones and their clones' clones. There was some legislation bandied about to give “original” people priority over clones in these matters, but it fizzled since nobody can tell which is which. Finally, after mass unemployment, homelessness, and starvation, the government passes the wildly unpopular yet arguably necessary “Stacking Act.” Rather than fix anything, this just causes the unhappy citizenry to rebel, beginning the end of civilization as we know it.

MediCure

Congratulations! MediCure is a universal panacea. Thanks to breakthroughs in biochemistry, MediCure is able to cure virtually any disease, from the common cold to the rarest of inherited defects. Illness is a thing of the past, as long as you can afford MediCure. The world is set to enter a new era of utopia. The best part is that absolutely nothing can go wrong.

How does MediCure work? It's an industry secret. It does something to make the human body immune to illness. It had a few interesting side effects in clinical trials, but nothing too concerning...

Oh, who am I kidding? Zombies. That's the side effect. Congratulations, you have successfully reached the zombie apocalypse ending of “Science: The Game.” Everyone who used MediCure undergoes some slight mutations, and even though they don't technically count as zombies, you're still going to call them that no matter what I say. So grab your shotgun. It's game time.

Build-A-Baby Workshop

Congratulations! The Build-A-Baby Workshop gives discerning parents the long-awaited opportunity to custom-tailor their own children. Want to make sure your kids will get picked first for sports? That they'll star in the school play? That they'll become rich and famous enough to get you into the finest of retirement villas? Hey, why not all of the above?

The only problem with Build-A-Baby workshop is that nobody ever wants their kids to have flaw. They want them to be the best kids possible. Thus, Build-A-Baby has kinda thrust the evolution of the human race into hyperspeed. And hey, it's not a bad thing. These kids are awesome at everything, to the point where their abilities would almost qualify as superpowers if they weren't so commonplace.

Some spoilsports might point out that these kids probably don't qualify as human anymore, but who needs humans when you could have something better? It won't be too long before boring old humans go extinct entirely. The times are changing, so you might as well get used to it. Plus, you probably don't want to tick these kids off.

A Flying Car

Congratulations! You have made a flying car! It's a car that flies! Just like science fiction movies! A flying car, man! We are totally in the future now!

Now, everybody drives around in flying cars, which solves traffic congestion and is generally awesome. Major cities have begun working on public transportation tubes to replace subways, and geodesic domes have quickly become “in” for architecture.

After the invention of the flying car, other scientists stop trying. I mean, there's really no point to further scientific progress, is there? It's already the future, there's nothing else we can do. What else do we need? The wildest whim that humanity has ever dared to dream – the *flying car* – has become reality. All of human history was a merely a mechanism by which to arrive at this point. We have cars that fly: our work as a species is done. There is nothing left to do except enjoy the fruits of our labor, and drive around in the sky until the downfall of civilization.

Subatomic Safari

Congratulations! The Subatomic Safari Personal Particle Collider has brought the exciting frontier of scientific research into the living room. Without leaving their couch, consumers can generate extraordinary amounts of energy and witness the wonders of subatomic particles never before seen by the common man. Maybe, like the home astronomers of yore, an average guy could end up discovering a new particle that results in a scientific breakthrough or gives life meaning!

Naysayers of the Subatomic Safari point out the infinitesimal chance that the high-energy collisions involved could cause a black hole. However, the studies sponsored by your company keep finding that that would require a coincidence of silly proportions, one that, for all intents and purposes, could never happen. Fortunately, those studies are right, and that coincidence never happens.

Unfortunately, an even bigger coincidence ends up happening, as both a teenager in Alaska and an Australian housewife discover black holes at roughly the same time. Those doubters were way off: the world isn't going to collapse into a black hole. It's totally the opposite: the world is being ripped apart.

QEnergy

Congratulations! QEnergy is the energy source mankind has been waiting for. It doesn't pollute like fossil fuels, it's far more powerful than any windmill or solar panel, and it doesn't have any of nuclear energy's troublesome plenitude of environmental hazards. It's clean, renewable, and as inexpensive as you want it to be.

QEnergy brings about a new era in human prosperity. Wars over resources gradually fade to a new golden age, and the power of QEnergy paves the way for the development of new technologies at an astounding rate. Yes, things are going just about as well as they've ever gone for humanity.

The military soon decides to develop a Q-Bomb using QEnergy. It would be cheaper and more powerful than a nuke, without the expensive and dangerous upkeep. The initial test of the Q-Bomb in a remote desert confirmed some scientists' fears that its detonation would instantly evaporate all the water in the world, including that inside human bodies. There would not be a second test.

Time Tours

Congratulations! Mankind has finally discovered how to travel through time, and it's all thanks to Time Tours. Not only is time travel possible, but it's also conveniently commercializable. Want to see a great moment in history? Those are probably overbooked, but you might be able to see a dinosaur or something. It's awfully hard to fit too many people into most historical happenings without anybody noticing – one joker throws a spitball at Ben Franklin and Time Tours might be down a historical event.

One question about time travel has always been how paradoxes get resolved. What would happen if some guy killed his parents, for example, or accidentally enacted some long chain of events that caused his parents to never have been born? Some people thought that the universe might split into multiple timestreams, or be destroyed altogether.

As it turns out, a paradox causes time to go into an infinite loop. Carefully replace all the World Event, Researchers, and Inventions into the order they were in to begin the game and play again, being sure to make all the same decisions so that Time Tours once again causes the Doomsday Clock to strike midnight.

Parallel You-niverse

Congratulations! The Parallel You-niverse system has opened infinite new frontiers to human exploration. Anyone can open a dimensional gateway to another universe, for a vacation or to move in permanently. With its easily indexable search system, it's a snap to choose the universe that's right for you.

Unlike some inventions, Parallel You-niverse is too expensive to make much of a difference to the Average Joe. However, its theoretical implications are astounding, and the wealthy (e.g. you) can find anything you can imagine in the wide multiverse.

For a while, interdimensional trade and commerce flourish as Earth finds friends in a variety of parallel Earths. Until one day, on a routine visit to Universe QXA1333148513 (a.k.a. the Universe that is Pretty Much Like This One but with Mountains Made of Diamonds), the Parallel You-niverse operator accidentally types in Universe QXA1333184513 (a.k.a. the Universe that is Also a Giant Snake). This causes the Earth to be eaten by a giant snake. But hey, it's only one universe.

Microbuddies

Congratulations! Nanotechnology is truly the next big thing in science, and Microbuddies lead the way in the field. Microbuddies are microscopic robots programmed to be as helpful as possible. They're small enough to fight viruses and repair cells inside the human body. Anything to help.

Microbuddies are purchased by the millions. They're snapped up by governments and private healthcare providers alike, as they have made the old-fashioned style of human medical practice obsolete. Not only can they automatically monitor an individual's health and eliminate germs, but they can also instantly repair broken bones and even certain forms of dismemberment.

The thing about Microbuddies is they're so small that it takes a lot of them to get anything useful done. Fortunately, Microbuddies have the ability to build new Microbuddies out of whatever material is lying

around: rocks, metal, living tissue, whatever. Microbuddies know that they are so helpful that the most helpful thing they can do is to build lots of new Microbuddies. They're so good at this helpful task that they soon build new robot friends out of all the molecules present on Earth. As a consequence, the latter has become a planet-sized cloud of Microbuddies and good intentions headed towards Mars.

Zap'n'Go Personal Teleporter

Congratulations! Through the magic of Zap'n'Go, the hassles of transportation have been eliminated forever. No longer will mankind have to waste time walking from place to place or stuck in traffic. They can simply punch a location into their Zap'n'Go and appear at the destination Zap'n'Go instantly.

Needless to say, everyone wants to purchase a Zap'n'Go station to make transportation easier. But saving travel time isn't the only positive effect of Zap'n'Go. With motor vehicles largely eliminated, the environment becomes healthier. The world becomes more globalized, as the spacial boundaries separating nations have been rendered meaningless. Workplace productivity even rises significantly, as there are now far fewer excuses for being late to work.

How does teleportation work? It's easy to understand. Zap'n'Go simply folds space, creating an instantaneous distance between two points. With so many Zap'n'Go stations on Earth, all that folding has the unfortunately invisible side effect of causing space to become somewhat wrinkled. This causes spontaneous irregularities in linear space, such as a small dog instantly appearing on a different continent, or a mountain disappearing into the ocean. The most notable such occurrence happens when a large portion of the sun suddenly swaps places with a large portion the Earth. Fortunately, this destroys the problematic Zap'n'Go stations. Unfortunately, it destroys everything else on Earth too.

Xenomatch Interstellar Dating Service

Congratulations! The Xenomatch Interstellar Dating Service has finally provided mankind with the incentive to travel into space and colonize other galaxies. As it turns out, there is sentient life on other planets, and a significant portion of it consists of lonely singles looking for a good time (or at least enough to put on the front page of the Xenomatch website).

Xenomatch helps humanity enjoy friendly relations with a variety of alien lifeforms. What better way to initiate contact with other species than through online dating? Xenomatch is a revolution, helping humanity expand both physically and in terms of cultural mores.

That is, until the fateful day when mankind ventures into a certain nebula. Until that day, the nebula had been known as NGC 8126, but afterward, it would be forever known as the homeworld of the *SpaceWolves*®! Yes, man journeyed into space seeking new frontiers, but in a cruelly ironic twist, instead discovers his oldest enemy! *SpaceWolves*®! are not interested in any relationship beyond devouring other species or assimilating them into the fiendish wolvern hive mind. Now, humanity faces its greatest challenge yet: being hunted to the ends of the universe by the ravenous hordes of *SpaceWolves*®!

But that's a story for another board game.