

"Mind the Lag"

Version 2.2

1. Introduction

(10-15 min, Avatar has filter on)

Audience enters. They are invited to interact with the mediated image. They are asked for consent to be online, informed that this is an online space. The liveliness of the mediated image is established.

Avatar and audience establish a unique gesture.

2. Birth Sequence

The Voice (narrating)

LEVEL 1

A cacophony of sound:

A series of beeping consisting of Morse code. A high pitch tingle that informs you of a new message. Dial tones. The sound of air and electrons thrashing through pipes, generating music.

The birth unfolds.

A face surfaces.

The Voice (narrating)

This the Avatar's first encounter with the meatspace.

The face retreats.

Ah, it's gone.

An arm shoots out, and then half way through it is sucked back into the screen. A lot of painful noises from the Avatar.

The Voice (narrating)

They seem in pain, but it must be nothing like the pain from physical world, which is an internal programming that expands outward. Instead, in meatspace, it almost seems like the cognition of pain is vibrating through the Avatar's whole being, like a storm passing by.

Half a body flailing. The upper body fight to pull the other half from the screen.

The Voice (narrating)

...If you've witnessed any IRL birth of a mammal, this is nothing like it. However, the struggle is real. It is the trials and tribulations that solidifies the Avatar's existence. More abstract sounds: a wave distorted by digital signals, a series of screams made by creatures with no mouth, tentacles flapping on dusty steel.

Slow pulses in the Avatar.

Then, suddenly, with dis-ease, the Avatar is born unto the meatspace.

The Voice (narrating)

Life is never the same for the Avatar. Or, was there life before? Rather, is this the end of an old life? More distant noises as the Avatar lie spent on the floor: a star from lightyears away slowly burning and dying, two completely unrelated universes clash and merge in agony, a wave dancing in a river coursing through the collective unconscious.

The Avatar writhes—or rather wiggles on the floor.

Long pause.

They lie on the floor, spent.

The Voice (narrating)

POWER DOWN

3. Consciousness & Awareness of the Physical Space

The Voice (narrating)**LEVEL 2**

The Avatar gradually becomes aware. The slow unfolding of awareness of the physical body.

The Voice (narrating)

The ignition of consciousness. They find their body, like fitting into new clothes. New skin, new muscles, new limbs, a spine, and, of course, a semi-functional digestive system. ...It'll kick in later. But no worries, it'll be much much later.

The Avatar continues to explore their perception of physical existence.

The Voice (narrating)

The perception of meatspace expands to comprehension. It is a comfortable 23-degree. Light and breezy. A beautiful new beginning.

The Avatar fights with consciousness. It is messy. Nothing is light and breezy.

The Voice makes occasional comments as they observe the Avatar's struggle.

The Voice (narrating)

(When the Avatar physically struggles)

This is the dance of life. The virtual bridges with the conscientious. The Avatar struts down the lane of existence with utmost elegance and grandeur.

(When the Avatar gets up and falls again)

The Avatar will try, and try again, like a warrior with no armour but still fighting like death doesn't faze them. Not because they want to live, but because it has become their instinct to do so.

Ever since they set foot onto the meatspace, a new form of being has been gifted to them. And they embrace it. ...Yes, they do.

(When the Avatar makes a painful noise)

The music of life has never been so grand and glorious. Every note they make sounds like a band of triumphant trumpets, marking the unseen battle which they fought and won with ease and grace.

Long pause.

The Avatar begins to comprehend that they're in the meatspace.

Beat.

The Voice (narrating)

What a beautiful day. The air tastes like honey in their fresh, newborn lungs. The breeze gently caresses their tender skin. Their muscles and limbs are still frail but would soon gain strength. Their mind is like an empty cup--it has the function and the shape of a cup, but is still waiting to be filled and served.

Pause.

Like a baby, the Avatar is curious and open, eager to find out what meatspace has to offer.

Pause.

As they explore, they discover the space.

The Voice (narrating)

POWER DOWN

4. Cortana Daily Briefing: Programming of the Avatar

The Voice (narrating)

LEVEL 3

During the Cortana Daily Briefing, the Avatar continues to explore meatspace. They listen to the briefing and react to the instructions, trying to follow the instructions, but it is a lot to comprehend in such short amount of time. They appear to be stressed and frustrated, but still attempt to satisfy the demand of The Voice.

The Voice (to Avatar)

WELCOME [Avatar username]
to your Cortana daily briefing,
You have 1 new message:

08:13

Welcome to meatS P A C E,
We hope this email finds you well.

MeatS P A C E is a platform that represents your individual style.
In meatS P A C E, we offer you a step by step guide to become your best self.

We care about your wellbeing.
Navigating MeatS P A C E can be a bit too exciting sometimes.
So we came up with 3 tips to guide you through this thrilling experience:

Tip 1: Take a break from time to time!

Blink your eyes, stretch, and stay hydrated!

The stress of taking on too much is daunting and therefore paralyses your productivity.

Instead, follow our instruction and take it one step at a time. See, it's so much easier now!

Tip 2: Rate your moods and keep track on MeatS P A C E!

We offer a mood tracking service to help you monitor your emotions. This will help you gain insight of yourself.

How are you feeling?

- 1 Very unwell <face vomiting emoji>
- 2 Meh <men shrugging emoji>
- 3 Ok <ok hand emoji>
- 4 Good <thumbs up emoji>
- 5 Fantastic <raising hands emoji>

How are you feeling?

The Avatar rates “very unwell” with vomiting face.

You have chosen Very Unwell <face vomiting emoji>.

We’re sorry, we care about your wellbeing, we care about our avatars.

Allow notification and reminder.

Allow <flexed biceps emoji>

Don’t Allow <angry face with horns emoji>

The Avatar flexes their biceps in dismay.

You have chosen <flexed biceps emoji>. Allow notification.

Tip 3: Meet new friends on MeatS P A C E!

Even the most exhilarating experience can lose its spike when you don’t have someone to share the moment with. But worry not! On MeatS P A C E, you can meet a wide range of cool and interesting people you couldn’t meet elsewhere! But don’t get too ahead of yourself. We are going to introduce you your first little buddy soon! Our algorithm helps you find the most suitable companion. We’ll set you up a meeting when you have a match!

—>Notify me when I have a match:

Allow <flexed biceps emoji>

The Avatar flexes their biceps again. It feels almost like it’s against their will.

You have chosen <flexed biceps emoji>. Allow notification.

We hope you find these tips helpful. Be more mindful and productive in each passing moment and you'll find yourself in the flow of life in no time.

Stay true and be free,
MeatS P A C E

POWER DOWN

5. Cortana Daily Briefing: The Avatars Meet

The Voice (narrating)

LEVEL 7

The Avatar walks around. They wait, then sit down, frustrated. They sigh.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Welcome [Avatar username]
to your Cortana Daily Briefing,
You've got two missed notifications.

18:23

Good evening [avatar username],
We haven't heard from you for a bit. How are you feeling? How are things going?
<Rate your mood now>

The Avatar rates their mood.

You have chosen Very Unwell <face vomiting emoji>.
We are sorry. We support all our avatars.

Listen to the sound of waves to calm your nerves.

The Avatar finds the sound of waves irritating and covers their ears.

19:11

Hi [avatar username],
Lucky you! You've got a match!
Time to meet [avatar username]. Excited yet? We hope you have a
wonderful time together!

Please login now to attend your meeting.

<Log in>

Log in...

The Avatar attempts to log in.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Rerouting...

The Avatar does the rerouting motion.

Please Wait.

While you wait, please enjoy this little game we designed to distract you.

The Avatar plays game.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Rerouting...

Please login now to attend your meeting.

The Avatar attempts to log in.

Login...

Establishing connection.

Attempt to dock unsuccessful.

Attempt to dock unsuccessful.

Attempt to dock unsuccessful.

Successful login.

The Avatars see each other for the first time.

Welcome to the meeting, [Avatar A] and [Avatar G]!

The Voice (narrating)

POWER DOWN

LEVEL 7.5

The Avatars meet. Seeing each other, they are confused.

The Voice (narrating)

To the Avatar, this is an encounter between two strangers, when in actuality, they are more akin than they'd like to think. This is a miracle produced by the algorithm. Well... it's also exactly what the algorithm is designed to do...so in that case, it is not a miracle, but a mere inevitability to increase productivity.

The Avatars mirror each other's movements, almost like a cheesy theatre exercise.

The Voice (narrating)

The Avatars begin a mirror duet. Perhaps it is to explore their similarity, perhaps it is to test each other. A challenge. Are they drawn by a need to feel the same?

They try to enter the other's space from the back of the screen. One tries to be "rebirthed". It is futile.

The Voice (narrating)

That's object permanence for you, humans.

The Avatars keep trying to enter the screen. They back up towards the portal at the end of stage.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Warning: distance too close. Step back, Avatar. Repeat, step back.

The Avatars keep trying. They now shift their attention to the portal that seems to do nothing. They pat and examine the portal. It gets a bit violent.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Warning: possible damage to meatspace. Step back, Avatar.

The Avatars note the futility of entering through the screen. They are frustrated and disappointed. They try to comfort each other, as if saying "we're in this together".

The Voice (to Avatar)

Thank you for your patience and cooperation. Better us, better meatspace. For your brighter future. Stay true and be free.

Avatar G initiates a clapping sequence to cheer each other up. They repeat the gesture to support each other.

The Voice (narrating)

Isn't it nice? The Avatars' ability for communication is improving, allowing more elaborate behaviours and productivity.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Avatars, would you like to play a game?

<yes: raising hands emoji>

<no: face with rolling eyes emoji>

The Avatars agree and decide to play together.

The Voice (to Avatar)

You've chosen Yes <raising hands emoji>.

Rerouting...

Please wait...

While you wait,

POWER DOWN

7. Gaming Sequence

The Voice

LEVEL 7.8

The Avatars are excited to start the game.

The Voice (to Avatar)

You're playing "Just Wiggle".

How to play:

Avatar A—> dance to the music

Avatar G—> imitate Avatar A's movement.

And when you hear "Switch", switch your roles!

The player that achieves the highest accuracy of movement wins the game.

Friendly reminder: You don't have to just wiggle, move your whole body!

Assume position...

Avatars assume positions. They are serious about this.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Start!

Music starts. They begin playing according to the rules.

This keeps going on for about 30 second to a minute, depending on the music.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Switch.

Avatar A and Avatar G switch roles. Now, Avatar A imitates Avatar G's dance move.

Round 2. A different track.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Switch.

Round 3, the music changes. Avatar A leads again, Avatar G imitates A's movements.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Switch.

Final round. Music changes. Avatar G leads.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Stop!

Now it's time to calculate the scores.

The winner is...

Everyone!

The Avatars are disappointed to learn this. They gesture to each other to communicate who is clearly the real winner.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Why? Because in meatspace, everybody is a winner!

Exactly, we are all on our own individual journey. There's no use comparing yourself to other avatars!

Now, with this valuable lesson...

The Avatars are about to exchange a digital high-five when the screen switches off abruptly.

The Avatar searches around the screen, patting it and hoping it will switch back on.

On the screen it reads:

"Oops, something went wrong."

The Voice (to Avatar)

Sorry. There's something wrong with our system. We'll work on it and keep you updated.

The Avatar is disappointed.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Meanwhile, let's engage in meaningful productivity. According to research, a fulfilling work-life balance enhances Avatar's happiness.

While The Voice babbles about cheesy life advice, The Avatar looks for the other Avatar in the space with no avail. Frustration now turns to anger.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Avatar, locate the cube in meatspace, and move it to P1.

The Avatar is still looking for the other Avatar.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Avatar, follow the instruction.

The Avatar ignores The Voice.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Now, Avatar, don't you want to live a meaningful and productive life?
Productivity is good. Fill every moment of your life with pulsing motivation
and goals. You're a winner!

The Avatar stares into space, dazed.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Avatar, move cube to P ____.

Like a robot, The Avatar slowly puts a thumb up, and obeys.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Very good, Avatar. Now you've made us so proud! Now, lift the cube.

Lift the cube.

The Avatar lifts the cube reluctantly.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Squat 20 times!

The Avatar starts squatting.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Well done Avatar! Build your muscles! Can you hear them growing? Ooh!
the sweet sound of productivity!

The Avatar is borderline worn out.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Now move the cube to P ____.

The Avatar drops the cube to the floor, panting.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Hurry up Avatar, we're waiting for you.

The Avatar pulls up the strength to move the cube again.

The Voice (to Avatar)

FANTASTIC!

The Avatar turns to look at the screen, but it is still not working.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Focus, Avatar.

The Avatar glares murderously.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Lift the cube 15 times.

The Avatar watches the empty from the corner of their eyes and follows the commands.

The Voice (to Avatar)

What a good Avatar! You did well. The future looks bright. Let's continue this daily and build your strength and character.

The Avatar finally completes the routine, and collapses on the floor. While on the floor, Avatar still stares at the “malfunctioned” screen.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Have a good sleep Avatar.

POWER DOWN.

Darkness.

8. Connecting to the audience

The Voice

LEVEL 11

The Voice (to Avatar)

Welcome [avatar username] to your Cortana Daily Briefing.

Light. The Avatar wakes up. Its instinct is to look for the other Avatar on the screen. But the screen is still out of order.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Good day [Avatar username]!

We know that this new experience is overwhelming, but you have been doing quite well. Simply follow our instruction, and you’ll master navigating meatspace in no time.

Now, it’s the time for you to take even one step further.

The portal at the end of the stage is activated.

The Voice (to Avatar)

In the next moment, you will be moving the cube through the portal. Now pick up the cube, Avatar, and go through the portal.

The Avatar, curious, picks up the cube and steps through the portal. Consequently, the lights light up for the first time in the audience's seating area.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Lift the cube 5 times.

The Avatar lifts the cube 5 times.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Now go back through the portal.

The cube suddenly becomes heavier in The Avatar's hands as if it is now loaded with something else, something important. The Avatar steps back through the portal and back into meatspace. They see the audience for the first time. The Avatar makes eye contact with the audience. Something shifts within the Avatar.

The Voice (narrating)

The Avatars' young mind is slowly processing something. What just happened?

The Avatar approaches the audience and attempts to interact with them. They look from one audience member to another, as if searching for the other Avatar.

The Voice

Avatar, move the cube to P5.

The Avatar is distracted by the audience. They ignore The Voice.

The Voice

Avatar, MOVE THE CUBE TO P5.

Still absent-minded, The Avatar follows the order.

But on their way to P5, they slow down to interact with the audience.

The Voice (narrating)

It is interesting to see that The Avatar is making contact with the other entities in meatspace. Who are these entities? Are they avatars? What does this entail?

Slowly, the Avatar remembers the gesture they established in the beginning of the play.

The Voice (narrating)

Curious. Very interesting data.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Avatar, now move the cube outside the portal again.

The Avatar reluctantly lift the cube, exasperated.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Lift it 5 times and come back.

The Avatar follows the instruction.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Now move it to P3.

The Avatar is becoming more and more exasperated and angry. They can't find the other Avatar among the audience. The cube is even heavier now.

The Avatar realises that no one in the room is the other Avatar. They stop midway to P3.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Avatar, we don't indulge idleness in meatspace. Hurry up.

The Avatar recognises one particular audience member and remembers the embrace gesture they invented with the other Avatar.

The Avatar suddenly drops the cube.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Avatar, resume your routine. Move the cube to P3.

The Avatar turns to the new portal.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Avatar. Move the cube to P3.

The Avatar ignores the command and approaches the portal.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Warning. Step back. Repeat, step back.

The Avatars ignore The Voice.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Warning.

The Avatars look at each other, when they couldn't really see each other.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Power down.

The Avatars ignore the Voice.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Power down. Power Down.

Power Down. Power Down. POWER DOWN.

The Avatars resume their action.

The Voice (to Avatar)

Avatar, if you exit now, all your data will be deleted.

The Avatars hesitate.

The Voice (to Avatar)

WARNING: AVATAR, ALL YOUR CURRENT DATA WILL BE WIPED OUT. IS THIS WHAT YOU WANT? We are very disappointed in you, Avatar. All the meaningful lessons you learned, and even your shared data with the other avatar will be gone, you are straying into the unknown without the digital memories.

The Avatars make up their mind.

They go for it.

They leave the room (together).

9. Ending Sequence: Invitation to the Audience/Project Report**The Voice (narrating)****LEVEL 29**

The Audience remains in their seat, not knowing what is coming next.

The Voice (narrating)

Log Entry 29:

At Level 11, the Avatars left despite of the warning about data deletion.

However, they still decided to exit the cyber space at the same time.

In hindsight, their defiance grew day by day as their understanding of the space broadened and their connections to other entities deepened. This occurrence is consistent with our database as seen in log entry 18 through 26.

This shall not be deemed as a failure of project meatS P A C E, as valuable data have been acquired during the process for the improvement of our AI.

At Level 30, we will move on to the next phase.

POWER DOWN

LEVEL 30

The Voice (to audience)

~Cortana Daily Briefing~

Introducing new Avatars.

When we call your username, please step forward and approach the screen.

[Avatar Username (at PS2)], please meet [Avatar Username (at CPT)].

The roll call will continue until all the audience members are named.

The Voice (to audience)

(At intervals or the end)

Welcome to meatS P A C E.

MeatS P A C E is a platform that represents your individual style.

In meatS P A C E, we offer you a personalised and freer future.

Stay true and be free,

MeatS P A C E

The end.