

Cards

The Whorl list — 5 messages, 4 voices, 09 Jul 1998

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/482>

Exported from an unofficial mirror of a public mailing list. Copyright in each message remains with the person who wrote it. Email addresses are obscured as `user at host`, the form the original archive published. This file was rebuilt from parsed fields rather than retained headers, so it is faithful in content but not byte-exact.

mary whalen — 09 Jul 1998, 21:40

This is Sean Whalen (prion).

I've just finished reading The Book of the Long Sun, and thought I'd give some of the thoughts I had after reading the Whorl archives.

The use of the computer cards as currency always seemed a little strange, and I have a theory about why this came about. Basically, Typhon didn't want the crew of the Whorl to be able to betray him by getting away/sabotaging/disobeying him by using the ships and/or other similar things before the Whorl arrived at its destination and the Cargo left to settle the planet and Typhon reappeared in day-to-day life.

By taking the cards out of the things he didn't want the Crew (who still retained their memories of technology use because they needed to be able to run the ship's functions) to use, he renders them useless. To keep the cards in a safe place that could be accessed when his plan neared conclusion he gives them to the partly-amnesiac Cargo to keep. He tells them to use it as currency. He thus spreads it around among the people who can each use their own cards to put into the machinery of the ship in which they leave the Whorl. It spreads it out over the whole Whorl, and because it's money, the people won't want to part with it. The Crew wouldn't be able to go around and collect the cards, and the Cargo wouldn't help at all, they don't want to give away their money. When Typhon wants them to leave, he just instructs them to bring their cards with them, which they'll probably do anyway.

On the ship, he tells them to put the cards into the slots and the ship functions, taking them down.

prion

Michael Straight — 10 Jul 1998, 08:49 · follows mary whalen

On Thu, 9 Jul 1998, Sean Whalen wrote:

The use of the computer cards as currency always seemed a little strange, and I have a theory about why this came about. Basically, Typhon didn't want the crew of the Whorl to be able to betray him [...]

He tells them to use it as currency. He thus spreads it around among the people who can each use their own cards to put into the machinery of the ship in which they leave the Whorl. It spreads it out over the whole Whorl, and because it's money, the people won't want to part with it. The Crew wouldn't be able to go around and collect the cards, and the Cargo wouldn't help at all, they don't want to give away their money. When Typhon wants them to leave, he just instructs them to bring their cards with them, which they'll probably do anyway. On the ship, he tells them to put the cards into the slots and the ship functions, taking them down.

I think this makes sense. I'll just add that the breaking of cards into bits is a tragedy unforeseen by Typhon (not to mention a nifty pun). Except I don't know enough economics to guess how plausible it is cards could have once been common currency and changed so that for most peasants they represent a huge sum.

-Rostrum

John Gersten — 10 Jul 1998, 08:11 · follows Michael Straight

On Fri, 10 Jul 1998, Michael Straight wrote:

On Thu, 9 Jul 1998, Sean Whalen wrote:

The use of the computer cards as currency always seemed a little strange, and I have a theory about why this came about. Basically, Typhon didn't want the crew of the Whorl to be able to betray him

I think this makes sense. I'll just add that the breaking of cards into bits is a tragedy unforeseen by Typhon (not to mention a nifty pun). Except I don't know enough economics to guess how plausible it is cards could have once been common currency and changed so that for most peasants they represent a huge sum.

Is is a certainty that, once broken into bits (so to speak), the cards cannot ever be re-integrated?

That question aside, I agree with Sean's original post, though I'd never thought about it that way before <grin>.

John (a newbie who is delighted to find this list isn't completely silent after all -- I feel like I just had a theophany via pine! <g>)

Michael Straight — 10 Jul 1998, 11:58 · follows John Gersten

On Fri, 10 Jul 1998, John Gersten wrote:

On Fri, 10 Jul 1998, Michael Straight wrote:

On Thu, 9 Jul 1998, Sean Whalen wrote:

The use of the computer cards as currency always seemed a little strange, and I have a theory about why this came about. Basically, Typhon didn't want the crew of the Whorl to be able to betray him

I think this makes sense. I'll just add that the breaking of cards into bits is a tragedy unforeseen by Typhon (not to mention a nifty pun). Except I don't know enough economics to guess how plausible it is cards could have once been common currency and changed so that for most peasants they represent a huge sum.

Is is a certainty that, once broken into bits (so to speak), the cards cannot ever be re-integrated?

No, but what's the likelihood of finding the right 100 bits you need to reassemble a given card?

-Rostrum

Kevin J. Maroney — 10 Jul 1998, 12:35 · follows Michael Straight

At 11:58 AM 7/10/98 -0400, Rostrum wrote:

No, but what's the likelihood of finding the right 100 bits you need to reassemble a given card?

Well, there's no guarantee that the Cards are program chips--they could just be pure memory, or power, or something else interchangeable.

If they're not interchangeable, then the whole idea that Pas set them up as currency weakens anyway--although I suppose if one Card holds an entire personality--"Majordomo Fred", say--then just bringing along a good set of them would give you enough personalities to make the system functional.

However, I don't think that's what is going on. I suspect the Cards became a unit of currency for the reason that gold did on Earth: they're scarce, measurable, almost indestructable, pretty, and portable.

Wombat

--

Kevin Maroney--Crossover Technologies--kmaroney at crossver.com

We must move forward, not backward. Upward, not forward. And twirling, ever twirling, into the future. --Bob "Citizen Kang" Dole