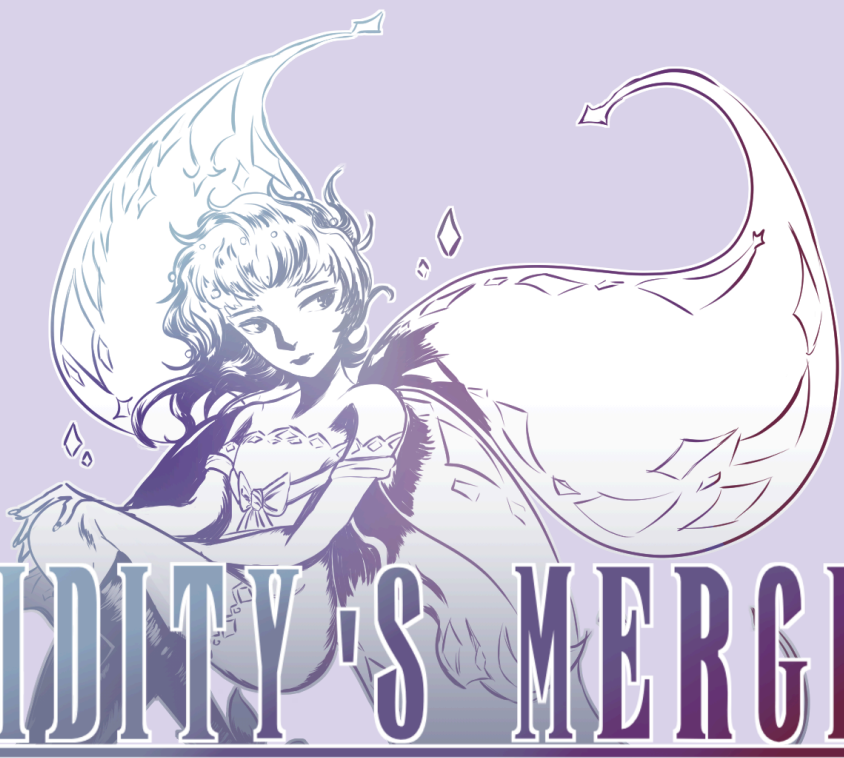




LUCIDITY'S MERGE ASCENSION

◆ Lore Doc ◆

Updated 27/02/2022 - See “Further Info” section

Foreword

As a rule of thumb, your character does *not* need to know everything written in this document. You're free to decide what parts your character does and does not know, based on what makes sense for their interests, backstory, personality, and so on.

Outline

The year is 2045, and the Virtual Reality MMO **Lucidity's Merge: Online** is one of the most popular games of all time. Half a billion individual accounts exist, spanning almost every country in the world, with an average of 50 million players logging on daily.

Lucidity's Merge is set in an open world fantasy land where players are able to explore, farm, fight, craft, and socialise to their heart's content in a truly virtual world. For the past 10 years it has been one of the most popular places to relax, unwind, and escape the stress of real life in a beautiful fantastical world where practically anything is possible.

And it is on this upcoming 10th anniversary that the game will finally receive it's hotly anticipated 5th expansion; **Lucidity's Merge: Ascension Online**. With new areas to explore, new enemies to fight, new items to craft, and a major update to the realism of the game's virtual reality tech, this promises to be the most exciting LUME has ever been.

To celebrate the upcoming expansion, the 10th anniversary, and the 500 millionth account created, the developers have decided to host a celebration! All players are able to submit applications to join a worldwide raffle, and 20 lucky winners will have the chance of a lifetime. Flown out to **Orlando, Florida** to an all-expenses-paid fancy hotel stay, with a chance to meet the dev team, *and* to playtest *Ascension's* new features before they're made public?

Who could *possibly* turn such an offer down?

History

By the year **2020**, the concept of VR Gaming had already hit the mainstream; players would wear chunky VR Headsets that displayed the game they were playing, while controllers in their hands and cameras in their room tracked their movements. While impressive, and deeply immersive, this was hardly the Virtual Reality that wondered the masses in science fiction stories.

But in **2024**, that fiction started to become real. The first example of **True Virtual Reality (TVR)** was showcased to the world by Pipe Software; players would put on a headset, and then lay down to play. The technology within the headset registered the user's brainwaves and neural signals, and in doing so was able to move in-game characters around *without the player themselves moving*. No longer did you need large open space or expensive controllers to play; anyone who could afford a TVR Headset was able to enjoy TVR from the comfort of their own bed.

The technology continued to develop in the following years, with the response time getting quicker, the headsets getting smaller, and the technology getting cheaper. However, there was one major downside; TVR Headsets were still unable to induce sensation in players, meaning the worlds they played in still felt fake and unreal. While you could walk through a virtual hallway and see your hand touch it's walls, you could not truly feel *anything* - like playing in a dream.

Then, the breakthrough happened. **In 2030, an Orlando company called Butterfly Cave released the first headsets capable of providing sensory feedback.** Dubbed "True Virtual Reality 2", it represented a landmark step in virtual reality. No longer did these digital worlds feel unreal, with no ability to be touched or felt - with TVR2, a player could truly reach out and touch the unreal. Brick walls felt like brick walls, grass underfoot felt like grass, the sea air smelled like the sea, and the wind in your hair felt like wind. Not only that, but Butterfly Cave worked hard to make TVR2 Headsets incredibly affordable, costing far less than any of their competitors and becoming plausible for the average household to own.

Virtual Reality exploded like never before. Software companies practically tripped over themselves to develop for the platform, online social interaction was revolutionized by the ability to *feel* the warmth of friends continents away, and the tech was even being integrated into medical research and treatment.

The biggest wave was yet to hit, though. Butterfly Cave soon announced their next major project; **Lucidity's Merge: Online**, or **LUME**, a TVR2 MMO like none had ever seen before. With a focus on simulating casual life elements and social interaction, with an expansive world to explore and enjoy, and responsive and exciting combat, it promised to be one of the greatest gaming experiences of all time. After years in development, **LUME finally released to worldwide acclaim in 2035.**

LUME has been in active service for the past 10 years, with a major expansion releasing every 2 years since. The development team also adds new content every few months in cycles of major patches, giving the players a constant feed of exciting new experiences to explore. As a result it has become one of the most popular video games of all time, as well as a common household name the likes of Phortnight and Bokémon. Practically everyone in the world knows someone who plays LUME, or plays it themselves. It is saturated throughout society; on TV, on billboards, on subway ads, on YouTube, on the radio... it is a cultural phenomenon like none have ever seen, and only promises to grow from there.

So now, in 2045, it's a year of celebration for LUME. It's the game's **10th anniversary**, as well as the year it launches it's **5th expansion pack**, as well as the

year it gained its **500 millionth player**. To celebrate, the team at Butterfly Cave have announced a major public event;

A **raffle**, where any players of LUME can enter and **20 active players will be randomly chosen** to win. Winners receive an all-expenses paid trip to Orlando, Florida, a stay in a luxury hotel, and - most importantly - **the chance to playtest the upcoming expansion**.

Lucidity's Merge

The best way to summarise LUME is that it's a **fantastical life sim**.

To explain more broadly; it's a **Virtual Reality Open World Sandbox MMORPG**.

To explain even *more* broadly, we have to start talking about the game in detail.

Players starting LUME are greeted with the ability to create their own virtual avatar from an absolutely stunning amount of character creation options, with a variety of fantasy species and facial, hair, and body features available. And then, after a short mechanical tutorial, they're let loose into the open world.

From there, they're free to explore. Some players grab their weapons and go out in search of combat, seeking ever stronger monsters to slay and pushing their martial skills to the highest levels. Some explore to find new and interesting locations, seeking quests and lore to gain a greater understanding of the rich world LUME takes place in. Others are here to create, learning new recipes and plying new trades, creating furniture and gear for other players. Others still are out to gather raw materials out in the world; mining, farming, fishing, woodcutting, and more, to fuel the player-driven economy.

Some players are simply there to enjoy a peaceful life with their friends.

LUME features **no strict class system**; players have an array of skills and abilities they can level and use, and their variety of combinations make up the game's "classes". There's also nothing stopping a player from levelling *all* of their skills, or only some of them. This means that some players will only ever level combat skills, while some might never touch a sword and focus entirely on crafting. There's room for all kinds of players to live the fantasy life that they choose to.

Similarly, there's **no central main quest or narrative** in LUME. The open world and sandbox narrative of the game instead focuses on smaller, more separated quest chains - focused in a certain area, with smaller stakes. Some players have never done a single narrative quest line, while some players explicitly search for

new quests to complete and rewards to claim. Of course, there's also the regular seasonal quests in city hubs; who could forget the 2037 Halloween quest with the Manless Headhorse, after all?

In terms of environment; every expansion to LUME has added new vistas and areas to explore, covering **a variety of environments**. Idyllic meadows, shady forests, scorching deserts, freezing peaks... and stranger, more magical places, like hills made of crystal or floating sky islands. Beautiful natural environments, with small towns and player homes nestled among them.

Lucidity's Merge is truly an open canvas, where players can paint their own fantastical life to live, on their own terms and to their own interests. For this reason, we're leaving the details of LUME's world and systems a little fuzzy. Simply put - we're not defining specific classes, areas, quests, skills, and so on. **We're leaving that open for you to define.**

The world of LUME, the classes and skills available, and the quests and events that exist, are something that you're free to paint as part of your apps, your characters' backstories, and so on.

Some Inspiration

If you're looking for some ideas as to what might exist in the world of LUME, then think to some of your favourite MMOs, RPGs, fantasy stories, and so on. What kinds of magic were there? What kinds of warriors? What fantastical places did they go?

We're willing to consider practically anything that could fit in the realm of a fantasy MMORPG. From regular knights with swords and shields, to warriors that use magical blades and armour; from your typical spellbook-carrying wizard, to mages that wield the power of time; from weavers spinning thread into cloth, to arcane artificers making magical-technological marvels.

The environments, too, can be varied; forests, deserts, mountains, and lakes are all as acceptable as floating islands, vast underground cities, magic-filled swamps, and ancient ruins. We're leaving the world as a blank canvas, specifically so *you* can paint it.

If you have any ideas that you're unsure of, or that you wish to double check, feel free to send an ask - off anon, if you want it answered privately - and we'll get back to you with our thoughts. We're really looking forward to seeing the world we can make together.

The Physical World

So, what's the world like outside of LUME? Well, we're also leaving that fairly open - lots of wiggle room for player backstories. Obviously, things will need to be a bit more grounded there, with no fantastical environments or magical powers. Here's a couple things to keep in mind.

- ★ The MKG is set **23 years in the future, in 2045**. So, there's likely been some technological advancements in that time (such as the True Virtual Reality system that Butterfly Cave developed). If you're interested in pushing some slightly advanced tech onto your character, you'll likely be able to.
- ★ **The real-life COVID pandemic did *not* occur.** There's a number of reasons for this, both for practicality and comfort.
- ★ Due to it being the location of Butterfly Cave's HQ, **the area of Orlando, Florida has become a new tech capital of the USA**. Now you'll find a bunch of tech bros walking around amongst the tourists, which is totally a wonderful addition to the area.
- ★ **True Virtual Reality**, especially LUME, **is incredibly common**. Almost everyone in the modern world has interacted with it at some point, and many interact with it regularly. It's used for relaxation and entertainment, but there's also development of medical and psychological applications.
- ★ There are a number of **industries and businesses around LUME and TVR2 players**. With millions of regular players, there's a strong market there that has needs. Examples might include food and drink designed for maximum nutrition and quick consumption (gotta get your gamer fuel), specialized beds for playing in, or hotels crossed with internet cafés where you can rent a bed to play LUME in.

◆Further Info◆

Below, we've compiled some answers to questions we've received on the blog and over Discord, as well as discussions we've had in the mod server. This is to make sure everyone's on the same page with regards to generally public knowledge by putting it all in one convenient place.

Avatars and Bodies

Your character's physical attributes don't carry over to their digital avatar, but anything related to their brain and mind does. So, for example, a character who is physically weak does not have to be so within LUME, but a character who has a fear of darkness would still feel that fear. This also means that your character can

have a physical disability in the real world, and not have said disability in LUME - as long as that disability isn't tied to their brain or mind. However, if you choose to app a character around such a subject, we ask that you treat it with the proper respect. Please do your research, treat the topic carefully, and so on.

In the same vein, your character can have a different gender presentation or body type to their avatar. Your character may, say, present masculinely in the real world and femininely in the digital, or be physically small and frail but digitally tall and strong. As before, we ask that you treat such subjects with the appropriate respect. Relatedly, your character's voice and their avatar's voice do not have to be the same - the avatar's voice is chosen at character creation, and is as customizable as the rest of the avatar.

Avatars are generally humanoid, although exceptions do exist, and they range in size from 2 to 10ft tall (in their default forms - powers and abilities may modify this). Other TVR2 games on the market may exist without this limitation, and as such go higher or lower.

Clothing and equipment within LUME is typically designed for a mostly "fantasy"-based vibe, but there are clothes within the game that push, bend, and break this aesthetic. Think items you might find in cash shops, glamour-specific items, or other items that push this limit like early industrial inventions and magical technology. Players are also able to design and craft their equipment that may break this aesthetic - see the crafting section further down for more details. Our rule of thumb is that if it looks like something you might see in a fantasy MMO, such as WoW or FFXIV, we're happy to accept it.

LUME mechanics

LUME has a large variety of available content, resulting in dedicated scenes for raiding, PvP, crafting, RPing... basically any sort of group you may find in any given MMO at present. Characters are welcome to be major players within those scenes and carry major achievements under their belt, which may make them notable players among the LUME community at large.

Combat

Combat gear in LUME follows a mix of vertical and horizontal progression. When new high-tier combat content is added, such as new raids, trials, dungeons, and so on, it brings with it new high-end gear with strong stats and powerful abilities. Typically, most gear from previous content is replaced with the stronger gear from newer content. However, there are also quests, hidden locations, and secret dungeons that contain rare and useful gear that still sees use today - and some gear from older content is still used in certain builds.

PvP content is a mixture of dedicated open world PvP areas and smaller arenas in specific locations. PvP is not available everywhere, so players who don't wish to participate don't need to, and those that do know where to go to find it. There is also the possibility for player-led PvP events, tournaments, duels, and so on, held either in these existing PvP areas and arenas or in player-built locations.

There are a number of rewards available for PvP in LUME, including glammers, mounts, and so on. There are also dedicated PvP gearsets and equipment specifically for the mode, as well as adjustments made to the various classes and skills so that they are all at least somewhat viable.

Crafting

Crafting in LUME uses two main systems - recipe-based crafting and invention-based crafting.

Recipe-based crafting follows existing recipes, and can be crafted through the game's usual abstracted crafting system. This system is a bit more tactile than your typical present day MMO, due to the use of VR, but is still very simplified compared to actual IRL processes. For example, you may smith an ingot into a blade by just hitting it with a hammer once, or make an entire shirt by sewing two pieces of cloth together. This works for any recipe that already exists in the game, such as items that can be bought from vendors or crafted gear added by the developers.

Players can also make entirely new items using invention-based crafting. This process is slightly closer to IRL processes, but still with a slight amount of abstraction (as well as the benefit of your in-game crafting level making such processes easier). As an example, a player could decide they want to make an entirely new weapon that doesn't exist within LUME. To do so, they would need to actually hammer the ingots into the shape of the weapon's blade, actually carve the shape of the handle, and so on. This process allows for unique items that don't otherwise exist within LUME to be made by players, who can then either share the recipes for others to follow or keep it to themselves. As a result, dedicated high-level crafters in LUME can be found making commissioned and bespoke gear for other players, with notable tailors, blacksmiths, armourers, and so on potentially gaining a reputation for their craft.

Other

Players are allowed to have multiple accounts, but will need to buy the game once per account. Each account also allows for multiple characters to be created, reducing the need to buy extra accounts. Each account is protected by password, 2FA, and other modern security systems, but it is still possible to use another

player's account either by sharing or hacking it. Both sharing and hacking accounts are against the game's TOS, so can be punishable with a ban if caught.

By default, players are able to view basic info about other players such as name, classes, levels in those classes, guild membership, and so on. There is an option to set much of that info to be private, although your name, current class, and level in that class are always visible.

Guilds exist within LUME, and come with many benefits - as well as just a shared community of players. There are guilds dedicated to raids, exploration, PvP, crafting, gathering, and more.

It is not possible to play external music (such as the latest hit hyperpop albums) in LUME due to copyright reasons, but there are various instruments in the game that allow you to perform music. You can also listen to music through an external program while playing, but such programs probably won't be available during the MKG.

There is a modding scene for LUME, varying from cosmetic and UI mods to hacks and cheats that some players inject into their game. Modding in all its forms is against TOS and will result in players being account banned if they get caught engaging in it. If they get caught.

Similarly, RMT (real money trading) and goldfarming bots exist within LUME, at about the normal level you would expect in a game it's size. Even with all the advances in technology, bot accounts advertising illegal websites is still not a solved issue. Making goldfarming bots work with TVR2 tech has proven difficult, but is at this point possible - given time, effort, and resources.

LUME and society

Streamers, influencers, celebrities, and so on all exist within LUME. As a result of the game's popularity, there have likely been a number of crossover events with other games, brand deals, product placements, and so on. In terms of brands, websites, products, and so on, feel free to reference real world brands like Twitch, Youtube, Gucci, McDonalds, Greggs, and so on. You don't need to use knockoffs.

For streamers, the typical present-day setup of a face or bodycam next to the stream wouldn't work, due to the player's body being completely still while playing. However, streamers would be able to tailor their in-game avatar to look like themselves, a streaming sona, or something similar. There are tools within LUME made for streamers to use, such as magical "cameras" that follow you around and broadcast your gameplay. TVR2 tech in general has likely been widely

adopted by VTubers and other similar types of streamers - think of it like a more advanced form of VRchat.

TVR2 outside of LUME

We're very open to player ideas as to the applications for TVR2 tech outside of LUME. The development for this usage can be as far along as it needs to be for apps, as long as it makes sense for it to have happened within a roughly 10 year span.

TVR2 is particularly useful in any situation where being able to put someone into a programmed and designed virtual space would be beneficial. This could be useful for simulations, training purposes, or other situations where control over the environment is useful. It also allows for practice and training that would be difficult to do physically, due to potential dangers or drawbacks, to be performed in virtual worlds without real consequences.

It also allows for people to experience going to places they otherwise would or could not go to physically, whether that be due to finances, physical limitations, or other potential reasons. Given that only your mind is transferred into TVR2 and not your body, it is perfect for such applications.

TVR2 also represents a new major step in long-distance communication, allowing people to "physically" meet over great distances - having both professional and personal applications. Not only are players able to meet in virtual environments, both real and fantastical, but it allows for a physicality that previous long-distance communication didn't. TVR2 allows players to go to a virtual bar with their friends and feel like they're drinking real drinks, or like they're really hugging each other.

The world at large

Technology is, broadly, a bit more advanced than what exists in our present day - think "near future", rather than "far future". If it makes sense to have been developed in the 20 year span between the present day and when LUME is set, we're open to the idea.

For example, "Smart Tech" has likely continued to develop - especially with TVR2 integration. You may be able to find, say, coffee machines that respond to a command to turn on issued while in VR, meaning that you can start making your morning coffee without taking your headset off. Of course, a lot of the issues around such smart tech that exist today likely exist within LUME as well; is it worth having a smart coffee machine, if it connects to a device that interfaces with your brain?

The MKG itself

The information in this section is a bit more meta than the others - your characters do not know basically any of this going in, but we've put it here so that you know what to expect going forward.

Characters applying for the raffle must own LUME, even if they do not play it. At the very least, they must have gotten far enough to have made their avatar in order to be eligible for Butterfly Cave's raffle.

The game will start with characters meeting each other in VR first, so your character's physical appearance will (by default) not be known to other players until after they all meet physically. You can, of course, decide that your link partner knows your character in the real world, or that your character is (in)famous enough within the setting that others might recognise them.

Your character will also be referred to by their avatar's name by the mascot, in Tumblr tags, and so on, but they are free to share and use their "real" names as they wish. Your character may use a pseudonym or alias outside of the VR space, or attempt to hide their physical appearance.

In terms of the split between digital and physical space for RP and events, the game will have a roughly 50/50 split at most times. During the course of usual gametime both digital and physical spaces will generally be available, and bar any restrictions placed for game reasons they will be able to freely swap between the two.

While your characters will come in expecting the raffle, the reality of the MKG will obviously be different. For example, during the MKG the cast will not have internet access to the outside world - so, anything that requires internet access to work will no longer function. The TVR2 headsets provided during the game will have a variety of apps and programs pre-installed, and any equipment, programs, and so on needed for accommodation by your character will still be available - having been provided by Butterfly Cave upon arrival.