

# An Attempt to Develop SIR (“shit-game is real”) Index

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## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the real and game worlds are increasingly interacting to each other, through developments and diffusion of various attempts such as gamification. These developments occur at least partially because the real world is not such pleasurable as games. Every game player would dream that the reality were to be like a game.

But when we say "like a game", what does it mean? Do we wish our society to be filled everywhere with gamification techniques that drive us to study more and work more? To answer this question, the author focuses on a line from a Japanese manga, "The World God Only Knows." (“WGOK” thereafter) [1]

## “SIT-GAME IS REAL” (*RIARU HA KUSOGE*)

WGOK started serialization in 2008 and sold over 7 million copies in total (as of 2014) [2]; and it was made into TV animation in 2010. Keima Katsuragi, the main character, is addicted to *galges* (video games centered mainly on interactions with attractive anime-style girls), and is not interested in real-world girls. He says “sit-game is real” (“SIR” thereafter), implying the worlds of games are much better than the real world.

Keima says so because in the real world situations are in most cases uncontrollable. People, especially girls in the real world think and act based on their wills, not Keima’s will. He can neither change, stop, nor reset what the things are going on. He is so accustomed to *galges*, in which everything moves around him, that he cannot tolerate such uncontrollable real world. As a game to play, the real world is a sit-game for him.

Since these words were so powerful that they became buzzwords in those days, and then became an internet meme that survives even today. This implies that these words capture what (at least some) people think about the real world.

## “SIR” AND GAMIFICATION

“SIR” view on the world as described above seems to differ from ordinary views on the fun of play in general or games, in which we mainly focus on aspects related to uncertainty and excitement.

In every gamification attempt, people incorporate game-design elements into education, work, and other areas of our society with some particular purpose; to make

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people study more, work more, and so on. But this would be the opposite from the “SIR.” In this respect, the current discussion on gamification seems to overlook such way of thinking of people.

## TWEET ANALYSIS

To ensure the above hypothesis, the author collected, during July-December 2018, 1,719 tweets referring to “SIR” from twitter. They include tweets of both males and females. The players of *galges* are mostly males, however, there are also date-sims for male-loving female players (*otome*-games); they share the similar feelings in common.

Analyzing the tweets by using affinity diagram (so-called KJ method), the author extracted 6 traits of why people prefer games to the reality: (1) predictability, (2) fantasy time-space, (3) hero-ness feeling, (4) presence of capture books, (5) paradise of underdogs, and (6) resettability. And these six were grouped into 2 directions of “SIR” tweets: (a) sweetness (traits 1, 2, and 3) and (b) convenience (traits 4, 5, and 6).

SIRers prefer predictability to unpredictability, despite that Caillois [3] raised “*alea*” as a necessary aspect of play. They also dislike failure, even though McGonigal [4] pointed out that game players enjoyed failures. That is why SIRers sigh over the lack of capture books and reset buttons in the real world. They want to forget their miserable situations in the real world and stay in the fantasy worlds of games where they are always treated as heroes (heroines), surrounded and loved by attractive girls (boys).

## “SIR” INDEX?

If we can quantify the degrees of difference between games and the real worlds based on above traits, we may be able to develop something like “SIR” index, which shows us how much (some aspects of ) the real world is a sit-game. Although how to calculate is yet to develop, such an index would contribute to improvement of our real world from a viewpoint different from what current gamification approaches provide.

There are two reasons. First, it is meaningful to reverse the basic idea of current gamification that starts from our real lives and tries to raise our performance by using game mechanics; instead, the author proposes to start from games, and tries to find how much our reality is inferior to game worlds. By doing so, the goal of gamification becomes clearer.

Second, gamification attempts should aim to create a more pleasant and convenient environment for *ordinary* people, rather than to make them into high performers. Inoue [5] pointed out that a gamification attempt sometimes leads to exploitation of workers’ motivation by inducing them to work more, with game mechanics, without paying more remuneration.

Some people want the world to be filled with uncertainty and challenges. But some other SIRers, like Keima, prefer more predictable world, without worry about failure. This reminds us of Endo’s “fantasy physics” in game design [6]. He pointed out that the fun of the game will be increased by incorporating the movement of objects that is impossible in reality. Likewise, gamifications to modify the real world more pleasurable need to alter various aspects of the reality more pleasant and convenient, in other words, fantasy time-space. This would be particularly important for ordinary, probably not-so-competitive majority of people.

## **BACK TO HUIZINGA**

Huizinga [7] stated that human culture originated from play; yet he defined play as isolated from real world possibly because the real world so far has not been playful enough. In this sense, to make the real world closer to games would be an attempt to create a world where human beings should live. “SIR” index might be a clue to achieve such a world.

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