



Everyone's a player
(in a mid-90s MUD)

Kenzie Woodbridge

@rainbowkenz



Let me tell you what I'll tell you

1. Context
2. These are the people in your docs neighbourhood
3. MUDs and player type theory
4. Implications for documentation
5. Solutions and strategies

Me thinking I'm just sooooo funny - throughout.



Context

Me:



BCIT

- 5 campuses
- ~2700 faculty and staff
- ~50,000 students (FT+PT)
- >500 credential programs

@rainbowkenz



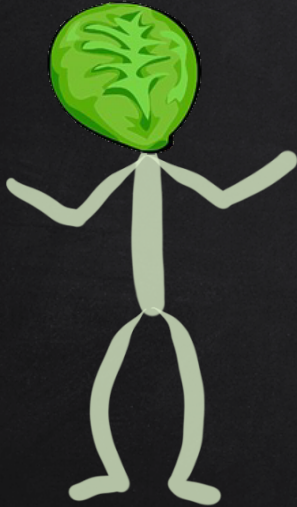
@rainbowkenz

2.

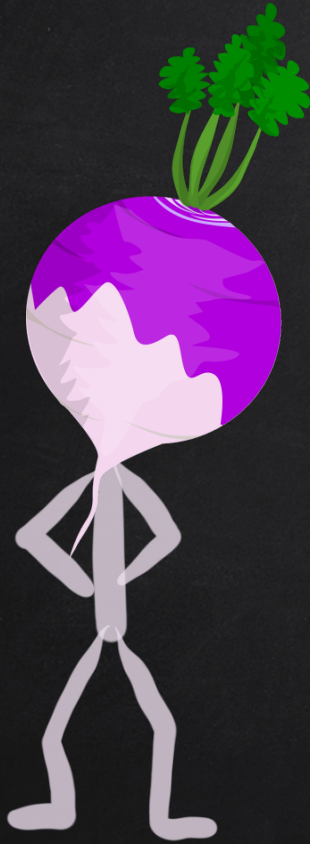
These are the people
in your docs
neighbourhood



“Sprout”



- Support desk
- User focused
- Broad technical experience and knowledge



- Specialist developer/
Server administrator/DBA
- Knowledge focused
- Deep technical experience
and knowledge



- Developer/project manager
- Achievement focused
- Sufficient technical experience and knowledge to accomplish the thing



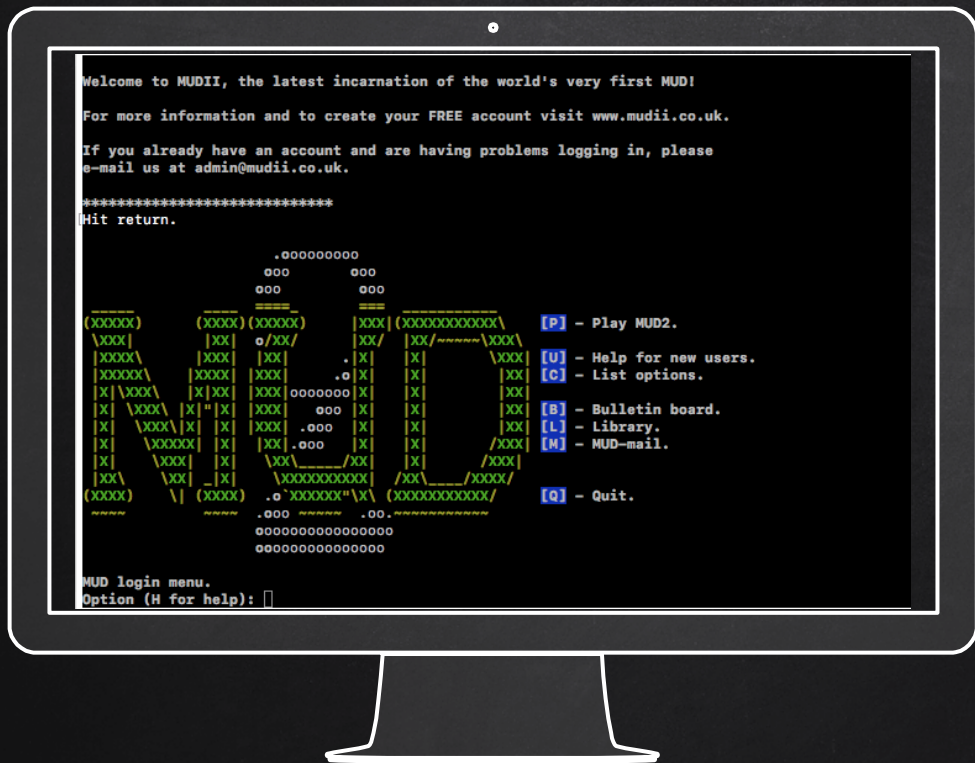
“Broccoli”



- More of a lifestyle than a technical role
- Hierarchy/power focused
- Unknowable technical experience and knowledge



MUDs and Player Type Theory



MUD:

Multi-User Dungeon

Richard Bartle &
Roy Trubshaw

@rainbowkenz



Interact

“Socializer”

“Explorer”

Players

World

“Killer”

“Achiever”

Act

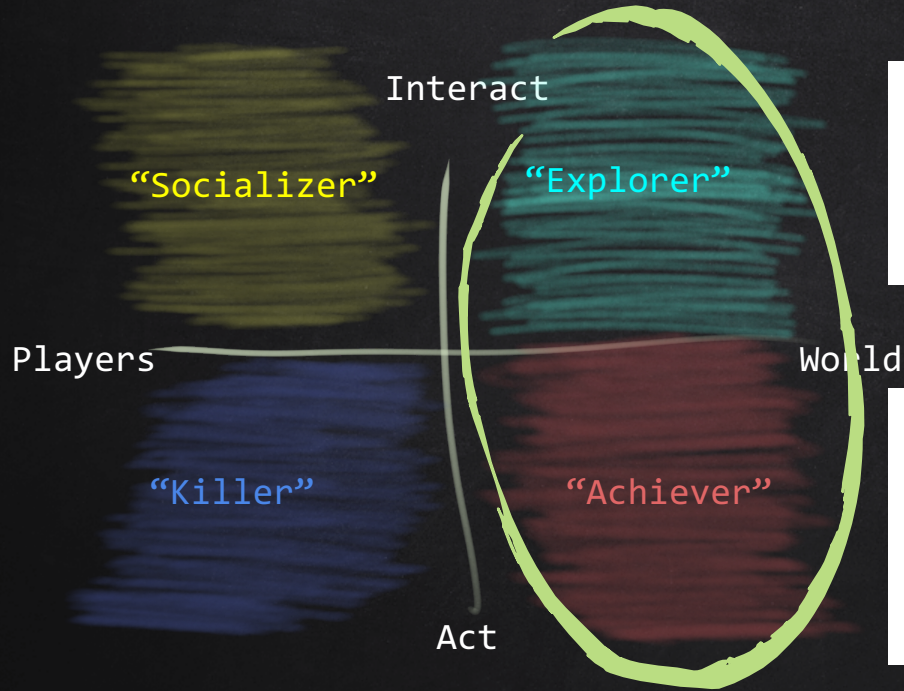
@rainbowkenz

Caveat Time!

The full complexity of the human experience cannot possibly be summed up with a simplistic “There are four types of people” declaration (or a “There are four lights” declaration for that matter) and I want to assure you that I am not attempting to do so. You are a complicated and wonderful human being with many many facets and so am I and all of us together are only a small part of the amazing complexity available on this beautiful planet we live on, which itself is only a tiny part of the amazing complexity and beauty and depth and interestingness of the universe and all of this is available for deep and interesting conversation, as am I after this talk, so don’t worry. Together we can combat the slow trundle towards oversimplification, but this is just a 60-minute tech writing talk so I had to follow the KISS principle, though I don’t like that because “stupid” is an ableist slur which I prefer not to use. Also, climate change is real and caused by human activity!



Implications for documentation

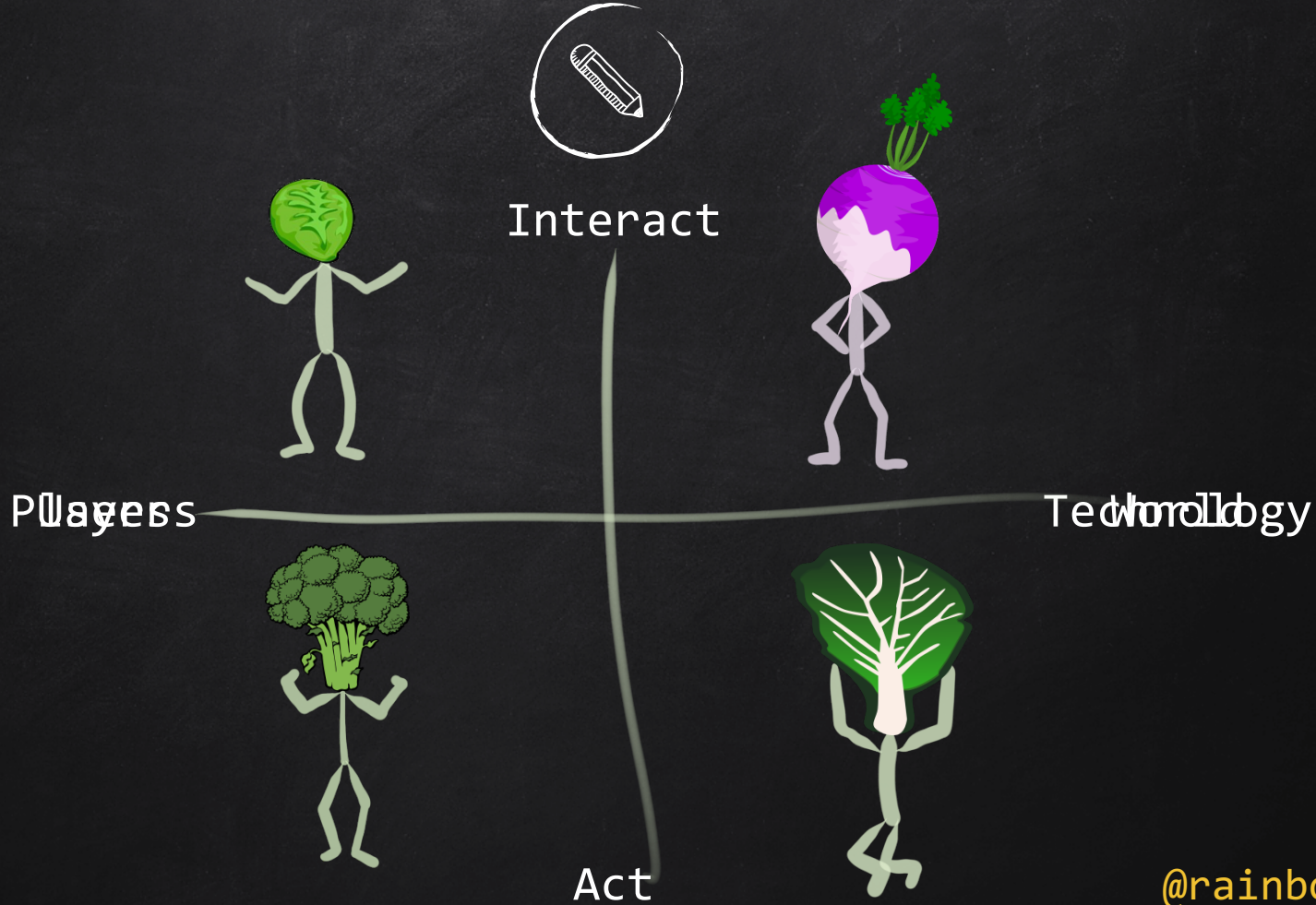


Ways to emphasise INTERACTING over ACTING:

- make help facilities produce vague information
- produce cryptic hints when players appear stuck

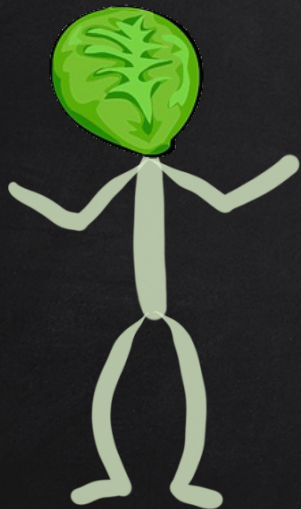
Ways to emphasise ACTING over INTERACTING:

- provide a game manual
- include auto-map facilities
- include auto-log facilities





“Sprout” Socializer



- User focused
- Broad technical experience and knowledge
- Natural documentor
(may need support to start)



“Turnip” Explorer

- Knowledge focused
- Deep technical experience and knowledge
- Natural anti-documentor

- produce cryptic hints when players appear stuck

@rainbowkenz



“Kale” Achiever

- Achievement focused
- Sufficient technical experience and knowledge to accomplish the thing
- Inconsistent documentor



“Broccoli” Killer



- Hierarchy/power focused
- Unknowable technical experience and knowledge
- Inconsistent documentor
- Element of destructive chaos



Solutions and strategies



Interact

How can I help?



How could you not know?



Users

Technology

I ruin everything.



On time, on budget!



Act

@rainbowkenz



Just need your support.

@rainbowkenz



Socializer documentation support

Personal Support Strategies

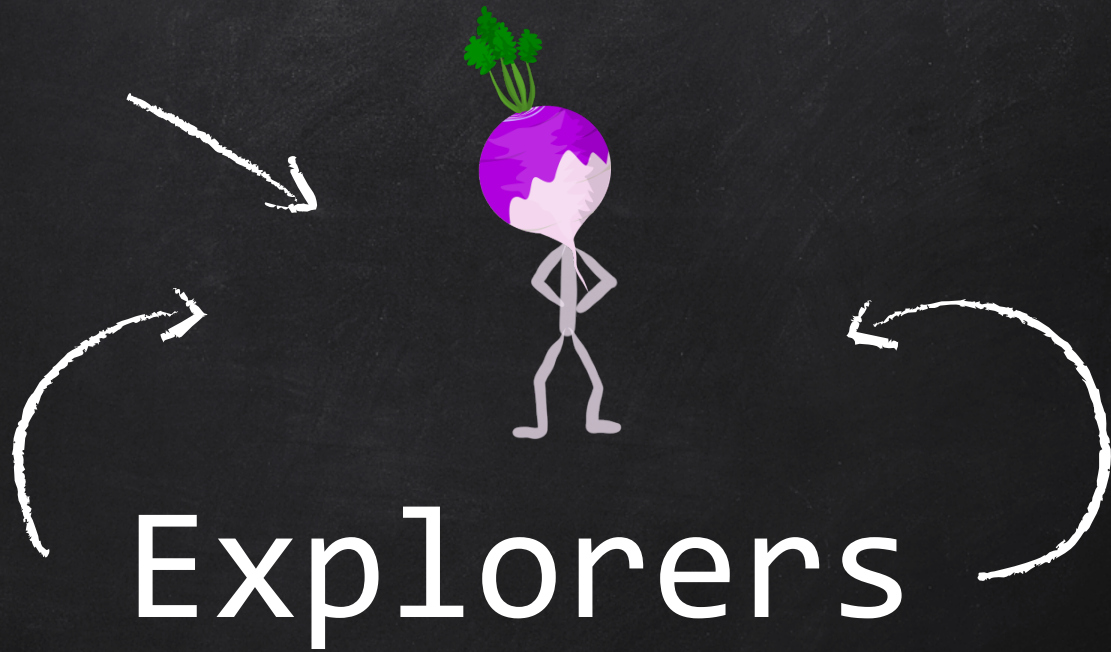
Expect to:

- ✗ Provide templates
- ✗ Assist with publishing
- ✗ Impose a structure and organization

External Support Strategies

Expect to:

- ✗ Advocate for them to others
- ✗ Work to include them where they are excluded
- ✗ Give public kudos



Let's make this quick.

@rainbowkenz



Explorer documentation extraction

Reframing Strategies

Documentation:

- ✗ Shows off expertise
- ✗ Keeps icky users away
- ✗ Is another thing to have knowledge of

Support Strategies

Expect to:

- ✗ Reduce barriers (provide templates)
- ✗ Rewrite docs for audience
- ✗ Help enforce expectation to look at docs first



Turn it into a game.

@rainbowkenz



Achiever documentation gamification

Gamifying Strategies

To motivate achievers:

- ✗ Post doc writing/review stats
- ✗ Make doc authors visible
- ✗ Advocate for docs as critical success criteria in projects

Support Strategies

Expect to:

- ✗ Be available on short notice
- ✗ Provide and enforce templates
- ✗ Publically thank them



Killers

It's dangerous to go alone!



Killer documentation.. something

Self-protection Strategies

Protect yourself:

- ✗ Keep discussions public
- ✗ Document everything (ironically)
- ✗ Engage Explorers in the struggle

Go Forward Strategies

You should:

- ✗ Treat agreements like agreements
- ✗ Follow up
- ✗ Expect but not tolerate delays
- ✗ Expect but not engage in power plays



Thanks!

You're awesome! Let's chat?

You can find me at
@rainbowkenz
kwoodbridge@gmail.com

@rainbowkenz

Credits

Special thanks to all the folks in the world helping others (sometimes for free):

- ✕ Presentation template by SlidesCarnival
- ✕ Pictures of Hats from www.villagehatshop.com
- ✕ Player type theory proposed by Richard Bartle
- ✕ Workplace bullying advice by Captain Awkward

@rainbowkenz