Site History

(Thursday, 25 November 2004) - Written by Bolty

Because, from time to time, people seem interested - here's a fairly complete history of the Lurker Lounge from start to present.

15 July 1999
The Lurker Lounge is born. Its original name, however, is Bolty's Diablo Strategy Central. Bolty designs the site to track good posts on Blizzard's Diablo Strategy Forum (DSF) and point them out/archive them so that casual gamers can learn about all the great stuff that only the die-hard fans were discovering on that forum. It's an ugly site, being designed by someone totally new to HTML and trying to learn it. The site is hosted on Bolty's university webspace.

18 July 1999
The first strategy guide is placed online. Naturally, it's Bolty's High Level Warrior Strategy Guide, thus fulfilling all of Bolty's wild egomaniac-driven dreams.

24 July 1999
Entire site goes through a redesign - facelift #1. Not very impressive, really, since the site consists of only 7 webpages. Coverage of DSF expands and some more strategy articles have been hosted by this point.

22 August 1999
The site's layout changes to allow for shorter links written on the DSF - facelift #2. Long links would break up in a forum post there and become unusable. Thus, the Lounge adopts the ultra-short directory and file name system which it uses until mid 2002. Also, the DSF Buglist obtains a home here.

27 August 1999
Another site design implemented - facelift #3.

05 September 1999
Bolty's Diablo Strategy Central starts its original forum. Designed to be simply a hangout for DSF posters, it quickly gains momentum.

17 September 1999
The site joins the Diablo Strategy Webring, a loose confederation of the deep strategy-oriented sites around the community at the time.

17 October 1999
Facelift #4, and one of the nicest, as Bolty's Diablo Strategy Central is renamed to the Lurker Lounge. The origins of the site's new name are shrouded in mystery. Or maybe just nobody really cares.

12 December 1999
The most popular feature on the site, the Screenshot That's Somewhat Interesting, is born. Intended to mock how 95% of all major fansites on the Internet have a "screenshot of the week/day/hour/moment" feature, Bolty soon finds that site readers keep bugging him to put new ones up regularly. The STSI fast becomes one of the major reasons for fans to check the site every day.

14 February 2000
The One on One section is founded. The first interview subject is, of course, Jarulf (who else?), the single most contributing member of the Diablo fan community.

15 March 2000
The Diablo II Closed Beta is announced by Blizzard. 1,000 testers are slotted to be selected. Over 100,000 will sign up...

21 March 2000
Bolty almost closes the site for good after a poor decision by him causes a lot of anger and resentment. Instead of closing the site, he resolves to take better responsibility from then on to run the site not just as a hobby but as a serious and dedicated gaming fan site for serious and dedicated fellow gamers. This day marks a significant shift in Bolty's attitudes about the Lounge, realizing that to many readers, it's more than just another fansite on the Net...

28 March 2000
Bolty is accepted into the Diablo II Closed Beta Test. Reportedly, people can hear him screaming in joy over three miles away.

31 March 2000
The Diablo II information starts in earnest with the first strategy article for Diablo II, based on the closed beta.

28 April 2000
Blizzard announces their Diablo II Stress Test. Even more frenzy begins.

23 May 2000
Not again! Facelift #5 is produced, with the site once again being completed redesigned and recoded. As Bolty learns more about HTML and good webpage design, he keeps getting urges to redo the whole site. As before, he promises that he won't need to do it again. *giggle*

15 June 2000
Blizzard releases Diablo patch 1.08, a patch which practically kills the Diablo mod scene by rendering all of the long-developed mods for Diablo useless on Battle.Net. Not a good day for the mod scene. The patch also alters the way the characters in the game WALK, fundamentally changing how the game is played! Outrage results...

22 June 2000
Blizzard announces the ship date of Diablo II - June 28th. Diablo fans everywhere die in anticipation. Thanks to a mailing snafu, Bolty doesn't receive his pre-ordered copy until July 7th.

28 June 2000
On the day of Diablo II's release, patch 1.01 is released, fixing minor bugs.

10 July 2000
Blizzard releases patch 1.02 for Diablo II, with some much-needed bug fixes.

14 July 2000
The Lurker Lounge moves off of Bolty's overstrained university webspace onto a new host at net-games.com. The site is redesigned again, although it's only through the code, with no changes to appearance. Still, it's facelift #6.

15 July 2000
The site celebrates its first birthday, and Bolty looks forward to another year of great Diablo II game coverage.

04 August 2000
Diablo II version 1.03 is released.

11 August 2000
Jarulf makes the first major shocking discovery of a bug in Diablo II, finding and reporting on the Lounge forum that monsters actually have four times the AR than is listed in the game's data files. This begins a tradition of major bugs and discoveries in Diablo II being posted in the Lounge forum(s) and making headlines on the site's front page. The Lurker Lounge begins to get attention from other scene sites as a great place to get solid news on Diablo II mechanics, statistics, and strategy.

02 September 2000
Blizzard announces the Expansion Set for Diablo II, which surprises almost nobody because players had discovered information about the Druid and the Assassin in the game files already. Game discoveries and strategies keep pouring in at a constant rate and the Lounge expands quickly.

15 December 2000
Bolty drops the bomb by revealing he's won a trip to Blizzard North to get an exclusive preview of the Expansion Set for Diablo II in January. He wins the opportunity to meet some of the designers of Diablo and Diablo II and it's not one he'll waste.

20 December 2000
Diablo II version 1.04 is released, with huge changes to gameplay and strategy. As with most major patches, almost all of the articles on the Lounge are out of date overnight.

29 December 2000
Yet AGAIN, Bolty completely redesigns the Lurker Lounge, in appearance and code. He swears that he'll never do it again, because it's a lot of work. Lost count? It's facelift #7.

02 January 2001
It's not really a "happy" New Year as the dark ages of Battle.Net reign. Hackers find a way to bust into peoples' accounts, and chaos ensues. As a result, Blizzard employs a "rollback," allowing Battle.Net players to return their characters to a state they had weeks before.

31 January 2001

A very big day at the Lounge, as Blizzard releases Diablo II patch 1.05 and Bolty releases his report on his trip to Blizzard North. The server crashes multiple times in the next two days as it's flooded with requests by rabid Diablo II fans to read the extensive article.

23 March 2001
New host! The site moves to a more private server run by Mavfin, site reader. Mavfin offers the Lounge a place to stay online without running ads or running up huge hosting costs. A grateful Bolty accepts.

28 March 2001
Blizzard announces the signups for the Diablo II: Lord of Destruction. The frenzy begins anew...

01 April 2001
As an April Fools' Day joke, Bolty claims he's closing the Lounge down now that he's graduating from Penn State (well, the graduation part is true). Not everyone is amused.

13 April 2001
The new Lurker Lounge forums open up, a much-needed change off of the old, single forum. The Lounge now directly hosts its own forums. The old forum's final statistics: 86,191 posts, and 7.46 million page views.

19 April 2001
Diablo II version 1.06 is released, with a few minor changes.

03 May 2001
Blizzard ships the cds for the Lord of Destruction beta test. Bolty's gets lost in the mail. What is it with him and game cds in the mail? Meanwhile, the readership and site usage explodes yet again as the beta causes commotion all over the community.

16 May 2001
Blizzard patches the original Diablo game to version 1.09, fixing the weird walking patterns characters in the game used in 1.08.

22 June 2001
Anger spreads amongst Diablo II players as Blizzard releases versions 1.07 and 1.08 of Diablo II, forcing many of the Expansion Set changes onto the non-expansion Diablo II characters. This makes the game insanely hard to play for the current Battle.Net populace.

06 July 2001
Bolty is honored to host Jarulf's Guide to Diablo and Hellfire at the Lurker Lounge. Jarulf's Guide is the authority on all statistical information on Diablo, and it fits right in with the theme of the site.

15 July 2001
The Lurker Lounge celebrates its second birthday. Bolty wonders where all the time went.

20 August 2001
Version 1.09 of Diablo II is released. The largest patch ever, 1.09 changes almost all aspects of the game. Everything Diablo II-related on the site is instantly obsolete.

14 September 2001
Death of the Lounge. Bolty closes the site down following a crash of the forum server and a realization that he needs to place a higher priority on Real Life™ for the time being. Bolty writes his goodbyes and the site closes...for good, remaining online for archival purposes.

24 November 2001
The site's forums are secretly restarted, without any notification on the site. Various site readers begin to trickle in to enjoy the forum's atmosphere without it being too crowded.

09 June 2002
The site moves to a new host at Nexpoint.net, since Mavfin is no longer able to run the server for the Lounge. The fact that the forums have been up for months is finally revealed by Bolty, but the site remains closed. Bolty sets up a donation page to help pay for site hosting costs.

15 July 2002
The Lounge reopens again on its third birthday, with the site splitting into two sections for Diablo and Diablo II. Completely recoded and redesigned, it's facelift #8. Bolty swears he'll never do it again. He also welcomes Griselda onboard to help him manage the Diablo II section of the site. The forums are greatly expanded and redesigned as well,

and the site awaits the release of Diablo II version 1.10.

23 July 2002
Lemming arrives on board to manage the Diablo 1 section of the Lurker Lounge, taking the reigns of the section devoted to the game now over five and a half years old and still going strong.

22 February 2003
The third forum software officially goes live, a database-driven software system with more bells and whistles than the second one, placed into archive mode for reference.

28 June 2003
The Lurker Lounge moves its host from Nexpoint Technologies to glob@t.com due to price gouging from the old host. Bolty is not pleased with Nexpoint and bears a grudge to this day.

03 July 2003
Blizzard starts the patch 1.10 Beta Test. Yes, a beta test for a PATCH. Supporting single-player and TCP/IP only, it draws mixed reviews from many Lurkers due to its extreme difficulty and current lack of Battle.Net play.

28 October 2003
The last great patch version of Diablo II is released, version 1.10. The number of changes to the game rivals that of expansion packs, adding so many new features to the game that droves of players who had long ago stopped enjoying Diablo II come back to battle the Prime Evils once again.

01 January 2004
Refrigerator, Occhidiangela, and Nastie Bowie take over the administration of the Diablo II section of the site. Bolty's ego deflates to nothing as he is no longer in charge of any content!

18 February 2004
Diablo II admin Nastie Bowie resigns from the content team.

18 March 2004
The World of Warcraft beta period begins. The Lurkers who made it in the test begin to evaluate if the game is a good fit for the site.

15 July 2004
The Lurker Lounge is FIVE years old! Very few private hobby-run sites ever last this long, and it has due to the community of posters who call this place home. In celebration, forumgoer nobbie creates a spiffy dedication wallpaper based on some early Diablo II teaser artwork.

22 September 2004
The Lurker Lounge moves to a new host, ServInt.net, after glob@t tells Bolty that the cost to host the site is going to go up 60%. Yeah, right.

22 November 2004
MongoJerry is named the administrator of the Lurker Lounge's upcoming World of Warcraft section, and the game is released the next day. The site moves into its third covered game.

23 November 2004
Blizzard's World of Warcraft is released, selling over 200,000 copies in its first day.

29 December 2004
The Lurker Lounge is once again overhauled for its ninth redesign. Bolty swears that he'll never do it again. We've heard that before. The site now runs on the Mambo content management system. The World of Warcraft section is born and a third game joins the ranks of the chosen for Lurkers everywhere to study in detail.

12 December 2005
Attika takes over the management of the Diablo I section of the Lurker Lounge, after a retirement by LemmingofGlory. The game that started the Lurker Lounge is nearing its 10th anniversary and its fan base is still strong at the site.