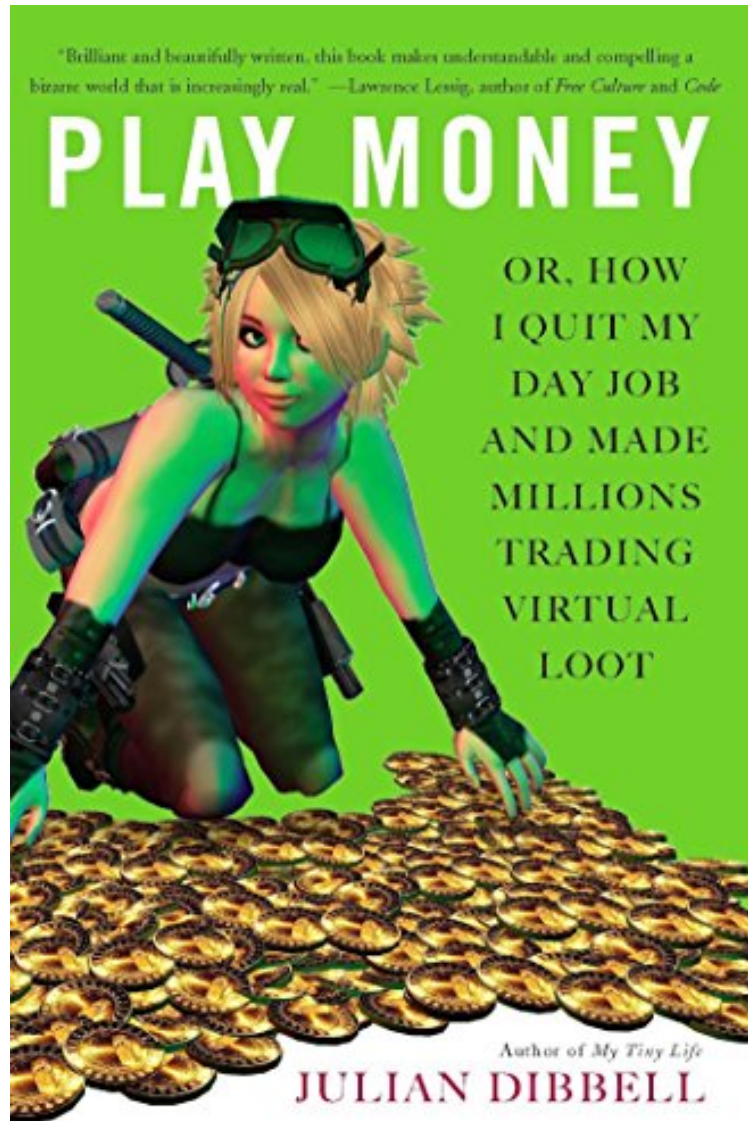


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# Play Money: Or, How I Quit My Day Job and Made Millions Trading Virtual Loot

*Julian Dibbell*

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**Julian Dibbell : Play Money: Or, How I Quit My Day Job and Made Millions Trading Virtual Loot** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Play Money: Or, How I Quit My Day Job and Made Millions Trading Virtual Loot:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Fantastic True Story of Living in the Black Market of Virtual ItemsBy machievelliToday, everyone buys virtual / digital items. The industry stands in the billions of dollars. So perhaps we forget what the wild west of virtual items looked like (although Blizzard and EA still treat the sale of

virtual items as a "black" market). Dibblell wrote this book during and about the wild west of virtual items. He decided to buy and sell virtual loot in Ultima Online, and make a living at it. He joined a virtual gold rush in a sense - dabbling with some of the shadiest gold farmers and loot hoarders out there. Like many cutting edge books, this one found its audience, then seemed to fade into obscurity. I decided to go back and read it again - just to see how much fun it was. And, I have to say that the review still stands at 5 stars after all these years. To this day I strongly recommend this book. It is light, funny - and still provides numerous insights into a world that continues. If you are a fan of video games - or have ever found yourself paying even a buck for virtual stuff (power ups, etc) - this one is worth a buy. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Truly Eye Opening By caravaggio I read this on a whim -- catchy title, you know? -- but it was actually really good. Sometimes you can judge a book by its cover. The whole idea of trying to see if he could make more money killing trolls in Ultima Online than he could as a writer is a great hook not only for the publisher but for the reader as well. Such a weird thing to do, you know? But the whole concept of virtual reality is weird to those who don't partake, and it's a real eye opener to learn that millions of people spend more than 40 hours per week playing these MMOGs, week in and week out, and that some of them have actually made millions of dollars selling real estate that doesn't exist anywhere. And you thought Florida real estate agents were slippery! Dibblell used to write for Wired, and he's a fluent story-teller. Some of the book drags a bit, but the biographical part -- and the sheer strangeness of the intellectual property rights being discussed -- makes it a fascinating read overall. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Not just a successful start up story By Dennis T. Bacsafra Philosophy, international labor, high tech, economics, globalization, the internet and virtual universes are all neatly wrapped together in this book. It is a very successful telling by Mr. Dibblell of what is going on right now...not just in the MMO world but in many aspects of society. It was so fascinating for me to read. He did not hype up the metaverse phenomenon. But, he did make it a bit less complicated. You really get the message that what is currently undergoing is not trivial and has serious implications to how we all live our lives. Play versus work, the lines are getting more blurry. But, it might not necessarily be a bad thing. If "Liar's Poker" is the must read for the financial markets, "Play Money" should definitely be the counterpart for virtual economies.

Play Money explores the remarkable new phenomenon of MMORPGs, or Massively MultiPlayer Online Role-Playing Games, in which hundreds of thousands of players operate fantasy characters in virtual environments. With city-sized populations, these games generate their own cultures, governments, and social systems and, inevitably, their own economies, which spill over into the real world. The desire for virtual goods-magic swords, enchanted breastplates, and special, hard-to-get elixirs-has spawned a cottage industry of virtual loot farmers: people who play the games just to obtain fantasy goods that they can sell in the real world. The best loot farmers can make between six figures a year and six figures a month. Play Money is an extended walk on the weird side: a vivid snapshot of a subculture whose denizens were once the stuff of mere sociological spectacle but now-with computer gaming poised to eclipse all other entertainments in dollar volume, and with the lines between play and work, virtual and real increasingly blurred-look more and more like the future.

From Publishers Weekly Starred . Something had to give in author Dibblell's life: either his day job freelancing for such magazines as Wired, or his 20 hour-a-week online gaming habit. Dibblell chose the latter, making it his business to exploit "the radical confusion of production and pretend" that massively multiplayer online roleplaying games (MMOs), such as EverQuest and Ultima Online, have instilled in their millions of users. In this cultural analysis-part memoir, part history, part economic investigation-Dibblell chronicles his attempts to get a piece of the estimated \$880 million market in virtual goods, commodities such as armor, currency and even houses that exist only in the gaming world-but which people are willing to pay very real money for. Funny and uncommonly thoughtful, Dibblell takes us into the computer fantasyland, introducing us to real-world game players, virtual economies and the places they interact, such as a legendary office in Tijuana where unskilled workers make \$19 a day to play online, "harvesting the resources of imaginary worlds." Dibblell dissects the history of computers and games and tackles a number of issues legal, ethical and esoteric, including the IRS perspective on profits from dreamed-up merchandise, the difference or lack thereof between "real" and "virtual" currency, and the knotty question behind all the time, energy and cash spent on so much mouse-clicking: "Why would anyone enjoy it?" An unusual narrative, careful scholarship and real passion drive this circuitous (pun intended) study of a new American pastime. Copyright copy; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. About the Author Over the course of a decade of writing and publishing, Julian Dibblell has established himself as one of the most thoughtful observers of digital culture. His previous book, My Tiny Life, was published to great reviews. Dibblell's essays and articles have appeared in Details, Spin, Harpers, the New York Times, Rolling Stone, Le Monde, the Village Voice, and TIME. Currently a contributing editor for Wired magazine, Dibblell lives in South Bend, Indiana.