MINEPLEX
NEWSLETTER

Cake Wars Update Recap, Apri Fools Day Recap, Subteam Showcases, and more.

In This Issue

Regulars

Contests

Features

Have any feedback? We'd love to hear it. Share with us on our feedback form!

From the Editor

During unpredictable and stressful times, it is important to maintain connections with your community, your family, your friends, and perhaps most importantly, with yourself. For many, accidentally retreating into social isolation rather than just practicing social distancing is a possibility, and for many others, adopting unsustainable lifestyle habits is tempting. I would strongly recommend you all to evaluate how you have been taking care of others and of yourselves during this time, and would encourage you to work on picking up hobbies and participating in activities that benefit you in physical, emotional, and social manners. Self-care has generally grown to be a topic of interest over the past few years and now is an optimal time to practice some of the tips that trendy websites have recommended for so long now!

It is certainly easy to stay up late, or rather, into the early morning, wake up to the warm afternoon sun, spend your day working inside on online schoolwork, or not talk to anyone all day. However, make sure that you are taking care of both your mind and your body! Adopt a regular sleep schedule and fully enjoy your day; go outside (if possible and safe) and soak up some Vitamin D, rest your eyes from the incessant glare of blue light, and take some time to reach out to somebody whose company you cherish!

In terms of community, I am deeply appreciative of all of you, whether or not you are a long-time reader or someone who just found our Newsletter today. All of you are a valued part of this lovely community and contribute to it in your own ways. This is a special community, and seeing so many new and old players reconnect and spend time together has been a powerful experience. Thank you for being present and reading the May edition of the Mineplex Newsletter!

As always, feel free to message me if you would like to speak with me privately about the Newsletter, the team, an article, or any other concerns. I hope you enjoy the May edition of the Mineplex Newsletter!

Stay safe and take care of yourselves!

- AGLThree, Newsletter Program Manager

April Fool's Day Event Recap
By WowCaleb

The first of April has always been associated with pranking family and friends and then revelling in the success of well-crafted schemes. Celebration at Mineplex is no exception — the community celebrates April Fool's Day like no other, as it has for many years! If you joined the server at any point during the week of April Fools, you may have encountered a few surprises yourself. In 2019, players sported one-colour skins, discovered original maps, and climbed the hub tree built out of rainbow wool. This year, the bar was slightly raised, bringing even more new April Fool's Day event features and with it, a wave of both positive and negative feedback!

"Howdyplex? What Happened to Mineplex?"

Yeehaw! On Wednesday, April 1st, players were greeted with an entirely new lobby modeled after the Wild West. The Mineplex sign read "Howdyplex" and welcomed all Mineplexians to take part in the April Fool's Day event. In the lobby, the Gladiators arena was no longer a public scene in the fresh air, but a saloon where cowboys and cowgirls roared for more action from the tables surrounding the brawl. There were no horses in the stables, but rather, game NPCs, which resided there, guarding the portals. The trek down into the mines became a search for gold, and many cacti and haystacks were found dotted around the lobby, providing an accurate portrayal of the Wild Western landscape.

This remodel was led by TheBlueComet, a member of the Mineplex Build Team. He worked mostly independently on the lobby with some help along the way. I took the time to talk to him about what originally inspired him to choose this theme and his experience with the process.

TheBlueComet: "The inspiration for the Wild West theme just started as a simple and fun free build for me only to practice and have fun when I wasn't working on any game maps. I got the ideas from my current live map "Old Town Road" and from generally

brainstorming fun ideas. Then, I thought of a funny name to call this project: 'Howdyplex!'"

Leading such a large project was an intensive task and involved a substantial amount of hard work and dedication. I asked TheBlueComet if he enjoyed the experience and what he gained from it.

TheBlueComet: "The project was super enjoyable to create and build as well as lead. It helped my skills improve as a leader and for managing projects. I enjoyed this project because this hub was very unique and it stood out from the rest. I am looking forward to making future hubs, and hopefully they will get approved by the leadership team!"

Finally, I asked him if there were any potential improvements he would like to see the next time around.

TheBlueComet: "I believe that I could have improved on by adding some sort of cowboy organic into the build, but overall I was very proud the hub went live for everyone to see! And for difficulties and limitations, this started out as a solo project, only me working little by little at a time until I was told that they wanted the hub to be live on April Fools Day. When I heard this, I

knew I couldn't finish this all by myself so I asked for help. Together with me leading the project, a few other builders helped me and we finished it literally a few hours before it went live!"

I would like to thank TheBlueComet for answering these questions and providing us with insight into the "behind the scenes" of the April Fools' Day event lobby. His leadership skills contributed to a team effort to deliver the final product on April 1st, a demanding deadline that was met by TheBlueComet and our Build Team in the end!

If the hub is your favourite place to hang out and interact with the community, the aesthetic features were not the full parcel— there was also a slime game to keep everybody occupied! Slimes were scattered throughout the lobby and each time you collected one, you would gain ten points on the leaderboard for the respective lobby. The more points you gained, the larger you'd grow, allowing you to consume other slimes and reducing the number of larger competitors.

The slime game was not the best source of entertainment by any means, but many players both in-game and

on the forums hoped it could serve as a stepping stone to implement similar lobby games, even as just an activity to do absentmindedly rather than aimlessly double jumping around the hub. This type of feedback is always appreciated over at Ideas Discussion on the website.

Map Update

To kick off the April Fools' Day Event, the Build Team shed light on the aesthetic beauty of sponge blocks, Jack O'Lanterns, and barrier blocks! The update featured 38 maps, some of which were recognisable from Mineplex's past, as well as many others were newly introduced solely for our entertainment. There were no limits to the creativity of these maps, such as a Lobby-1 themed Dragon Escape map and a Skywars map made up of a normal village! For ten days, players could indulge their memories by playing on older maps, as well as experience extremely altered gameplay on many troll maps.

To hear more about the experience of the Build Team producing these maps, the Build Admin dutty has agreed to share her experience of building and testing these maps.

dutty: "Honestly, it's always really fun to build and test these maps. Since we pretty much say 'ignore the guidelines,' the builders like to have a lot of fun making the weirdest maps, which probably shows in the final product. As for testing, it's really great to get the community opinion immediately on the joke maps. It's a ton of fun to play the maps with zero guidelines and just mess around, and I love the positive attitude regarding holiday maps in general, especially April Fools maps!"

Clearly, the freedom the Build Team had from guidelines which are normally strict was appreciated. In building and testing these maps, though, certainly there were clear favorites among the team.

dutty: "I have a couple favourites. First of all, I love 'You Spin Me Right Round" for MineKart. Although I did make the map, testing it the first time last year had me and the rest of the team literally in tears. I had no idea how it was going to play and it was hilarious finding out. We often play that map, along with other April Fools maps, at the end of testing sessions just as a cool down because it's something you can just have fun with, rather than focus on gameplay with.

Another couple that I loved, that I brought back this year, were some of my favourite maps from before they were removed. Those include 'Mineplex National Park' for Skywars, 'Oasis Attack' for One In The Quiver, and 'Industrial Grove' for Champions. All three of those maps were some of my favourites to play, so it was nice seeing them come back for a little bit!"

Looking into the experience of the Build Team, it would seem that producing these maps was equally enjoyable to the experience of many players who liked the presence of the maps on the server. Though the Build Team is often hard at work, this update highlighted moments where the team receives entertainment from the work they do together.

However, due to the gameplay-altering aspect of these maps, the update received criticism from many community members and often, confusion from new players who had just joined the network. There were quite a few limitations to gameplay brought about by the update, and in many games, the joke maps prevented gameplay from proceeding in a fashion anywhere near what it should be. Several active players felt it interfered with the competitive

nature of their favourite games among other things and many new players experienced confusion and frustration that their favorite games were not playable on joke maps. In this article, I gathered feedback from the Mineplex Community Insights Discord to voice the refreshing opinions of community members who disagreed with various aspects of the April Fools' map update.

BawkBawkBattles: "It's funny and all, but the Super Spleef map was just one block. It was super easy to boost wins—I got 40+ wins from that map. The Gladiators map was pretty annoying. I don't know about you, but I play Gladiators for the PvP, not to be stuck in a 1x3 area to be critted out. Those are just the two I found most unfair and annoying."

Atoximed: "Well, I liked [the SSM map] Biome Epicness. Those are the kind of April Fools' maps that are fun. [The SSM map] -0- was not fun to play on, and the borders made it so much worse. Biome Epicness only had the problem if you triple jump on the tree, you die from the border. It was much worse in -0-, though I play as Slime so my jump is higher, but it wasn't fun to play on that map. Just no more maps like -0- and fixed borders so that it's playable."

Many members of the community, such as these individuals, noticed how much gameplay was drastically altered by April Fools' maps. There was most certainly an issue with the borders and anybody who played these maps are familiar with an instant death upon venturing a block too far, a problem usually solved by our Map Issues (MI) team when it comes to regular maps. Players also felt as if the aim of the game was ruined, such as in Gladiators where you normally engage in a fully-fledged PvP battle to make it to the finals and reap the rewards, rather than fight in 1x3 rectangles.

Another point that was addressed by one of our Community Insight members is that of the length of the event. Players were informed by the Build Team and Map Testing Team (MTT) that all maps would be removed after a week when this was not the case. This raised concerns among players as we will learn in the response below.

Jaek: "I think they were fun maps to begin with, but after leaving them in for a week, it feels like they just got annoying. It wasn't April Fools' anymore, so they didn't serve a real purpose, which is why I'd much rather prefer them only last 2-3 days rather than over a week. I think the gameplay was fine. It's meant to be bad, as it's an April Fools' joke. I don't have any problem with that. They just stayed so long that people could abuse the maps."

Like many other players have expressed, there should be more communication between the community and those responsible for the map update, and more speed in removing the update would be appreciated. Furthermore, newer players on the network who might not have been as up-to-date with the forums and Discord did not realize that the maps were part of the April Fools' update, especially several days after the holiday.

I would like to thank all those in the Mineplex Community Insights Discord who gave their input on the April Fools' map update, as there are always two sides to these matters and it promotes constructive discussion to counter the only-positive feedback. The discord has topics and channels corresponding to various games and feedback discussions, used by Game Insights (GI), Ideas Team (IT), Developers, and Leadership. To get involved, feel free to check out the GI Introduction Thread!

All in all, the Map Update certainly played a huge role in the April Fools' Event. Players were presented with the opportunity to get involved with the new maps or provide their feedback on aspects of the update they were not so much in favour of. If you did not get a chance to take a look at these maps for yourself, you can always head over to the Official Map Update Thread!

What Else Did the April Fools' Day Event Bring?

The changes to the lobbies and the map updates may have been the most well-received features of the event, but there were also a few miscellaneous alterations that caused players to stop in their tracks! It did not go unnoticed that everybody's levels and level colours were mismatched and instead took the form of mathematical sums such as "32+11", and the fact that these numbers did not even add up to equal the players' actual levels was a source of even greater bewilderment. This feature addition is still a mystery, but we can guess its sole purpose was to fulfil the purpose of April Fools' Day by leaving everybody in confusion—it certainly delivered in that regard!

Players were also very surprised when they did not receive their anticipated stances on the victory podium as they usually do upon taking 1st place in a game. One of our very own developers, Sobki, took his spot in the win effect rather than the players who actually won, and many thought their glory had been stolen.

Even though the event is now over, we'd still love to hear your opinions on the event! We cannot stress enough how valuable it is for the community to have feedback. With teams that process ideas daily, it is the gateway to having everyone's voice heard. All suggestions can be provided on the website, or on the Mineplex Discord in both #java-events and #java-ideas. Even for such a casual event, it always helps to have an indication of what can be improved on to enhance the experience for the Mineplex community, and we are assured this will be taken into account next year on the 1st of April, 2021.

Recapping the Cake Wars Update

By 510bike

Over the past couple months, Mineplex has released updates for several major PvP games on the Java server. After much discussion among community members and the Game Insights (GI) team, Java Cake Wars received a major update on April 13th, 2020.

Cake Wars is a highly competitive gamemode, and it is one of Mineplex's most popular PvP games on both the Java and the Bedrock networks. There are two different modes: standard and duos. In duos mode, players spawn in as eight teams of two; whereas in standard mode, players spawn in as four teams of four. Although the number of players may be different in the two modes, the gameplay is the same. The goal of the game is to eliminate all other teams and be the last team alive. Each team spawns with a cake. This cake gives players unlimited lives until the cake is eaten or once cake rot occurs after 20 minutes of gameplay. Players must try to defend their own cake while also attempting to eat other teams' cakes. Throughout the game, players can obtain various resources and upgrades for offensive and defensive strategies by capturing emerald and nether star beacons.

The newest Cake Wars update was largely centered around the GI proposal document while also taking influence from popular suggestions and discussions in the CI (Community Insights) Discord. GI originally started working on a Cake Wars update document back in May 2019 and finished publicizing it after two weeks. To draft the document, there were many discussions that went on in GI, and a few members from the Cake Wars Competitive League (CWCL) were also brought in to discuss potential changes. GI balanced this update by prioritizing both wants and necessities. By doing this, the game could be updated to make gameplay more fair while also giving community members what they wanted.

The game received various updates in several different areas. For starters, some of the Cake Wars shop items were altered and new items were added. One of the biggest complaints players had were arrow prices. Suggestions have been frequently made by community members in the past to lower these prices. Before the update, it cost 12 bricks to purchase three arrows, now it only costs nine. Although it may seem like a small change at first glance, the new price will help make arrows easier to obtain at a much fairer price. A new trap was also added to the Emerald shop for 16 emeralds. The new slime trap prevents polly explosions within a five block radius around the cake. It plays a heavy role in defense and, combined with obsidian, it can become a very effective defensive weapon. Finally, tracking compasses are now available in the shop. They can be purchased for 12 emeralds with three uses and work similarly to the compass in Survival Games.

Some of the achievements were also changed. "Get Good" and "The Floor is Lava" achievements were both removed from the game. In the past, many people have complained about the difficulty level of these achievements. Two new achievements were added as their replacement. The "You, You, and You Die!" achievement can be achieved by killing three players with less than five seconds in-between kills and the "Stop Punching Me" achievement can be achieved by killing five players with a fist.

There were many other miscellaneous changes that were incorporated to improve general gameplay. The golden pickaxe now has Efficiency IV giving it a more effective use, the final world border size was reduced to the central beacon in order to speed up games, and a 20 second cake invincibility was added at the start of the game.

The biggest and most controversial change was the removal of slowness from the Frosting kit. The Frosting kit is the only achievement kit Cake Wars offers. It can be obtained by completing all of the Cake Wars achievements, regardless if one is playing on Standard or Duos mode. When using the kit, players receive one snowball every six seconds, with a maximum of three snowballs at a time. In the past, players used the Frosting kit to deal slowness and knockback to opposing players. It proved to be very effective in PvP and was often used to knock players

off of the map. With the removal of slowness, there has been a lot of public disagreement about whether or not that was the right choice to make. Some players believe that this was the perfect change as the kit was too overpowered before. Others believe that this kit has lost its potential, since slowness was such a major component of the kit in the past. With that being said, GI realized that the Frosting kit had to change as it was simply too overpowered. Slowness ended up being removed because the knockback is still very effective in 1v1 situations and the slowness aspect simply provided an unnecessary edge. Learn more about the first Cake Wars update here and read the changelogs for both updates in the #java-changelog channel on our Discord, linked at the end of this article.

Shortly after the initial update, Cake Wars received even more agreed-upon changes, most notably the alteration of the deploy platforms. Previously, competitive and casual players alike had complained about the usage of the platforms to suffocate other players in combat and in making plays on the cake. However, the new changes prevent the platforms from spawning blocks where players are standing, removing that factor of suffocation from

the game entirely. Wool Walls were also removed. Both Archer and Warrior received changes as well, allowing players using the Archer kit to respawn with purchased bows and players using the Warrior kit to gain a base value of 0.5 hearts per kill. Furthermore, cake islands now carry even more promising loot and both the obsidian and slime trap emerald prices were increased.

While parts of the Cake Wars update, especially the removal of slowness proved to be controversial, GI listened to what community members had to say about the game and proposed changes to LT that made gameplay experience more fair for everybody. In the section below, we will be interviewing two different community members regarding their thoughts on the update. KilledByVoid is currently a member of GI. He is also level 100 on both Bedrock and the Java server. Although he would not consider himself an avid Cake Wars player and mainly just enjoys it when playing with friends, he has extensive amounts of experience with Mineplex gameplay in general. Looof is a level 67 Java player. He frequently engages in discussions on the forums, and has been an avid Cakewars player for the last several months. Let us take a look at these two community members'

thoughts on the most recent Cake Wars update.

What are your favorite parts about the newest Cake Wars update?

KilledByVoid: "Overall, I really like some small QoL changes, which don't really change gameplay, but add something small and nice. I also like the two new achievements, which replace two old ones, which weren't really fun to do."

Looof: "I really like the smaller border during end games, and personally I enjoy frosting without slowness."

Were there any parts about the update that you did not enjoy?

KilledByVoid: "Overall, there is nothing I can complain about. All changes had a reason and I am fine with that."

Looof: "The only thing I did not like about the update is the bricks needed for arrows going from 12 to 9. I feel like I have noticed a drastic increase in the number of players who tend to rely on a bow just keep on spamming arrows then before the update."

How has the update impacted your gameplay?

KilledByVoid: "From gameplay overall, it doesn't really change anything for me. I can still play the same ways as before, but with some nice new little features."

Looof: "The update hasn't really done anything to my gameplay, other than me finding it easier to kill people who used to rely on the slowness that frosting gave. I am a frosting main, and I feel like I will continue to be due to the comboing ability the kit offers. I still think it gives a nice advantage in fights, and now it is more balanced."

After the newest update, would you still change anything about the game if you could?

KilledByVoid: "The game overall still has potential for more features, items, and other things. I would like to see new items you can either - buy from the shop or get from a cake island to make the gameplay more interesting. Otherwise, there is nothing I would change now."

Looof: "I would not change anything about the game currently, as I see it is perfect right now."

A huge thank you to KilledByVoid and Looof for taking the time to share their thoughts about the Cake Wars Update.

Whether you are an experienced player in the community, or even if you are just starting out, all members have a voice and are encouraged to share their feedback. Mineplex is a server for everybody, whether you want to simply play with friends, try out some new games, or play competitively. Everybody plays a role in shaping this community and it is vital that each person's voice can be heard. That way, changes can be implemented to make a more fair gameplay for everyone. Community members looking to share their suggestions about potential Cake Wars updates can make a thread in the Game Alterations section of the forums here. Alternatively, players can share their feedback about the newest update in the #cakewars-update channel in the Mineplex Discord. Community members can also share their feedback in the #cakewars section of the CI Discord. Players interested in joining the CI Discord can obtain an invite from a member of CoM (Community Management) or a GI Category Lead.

Over the past couple months, Mineplex has seen updates for several of our major PvP games. Communication has played a vital role in all of these updates and active discussion between GI, community members, and the development team has led to success. GI and the development team have done a tremendous job listening to community members' feedback in order to improve gameplay for everyone. Hopefully, in the future, similar processes will happen in order to make updates successful. A huge thank you to the development team, GI, and all of the community members who made this update possible. Finally, a massive thank you to Rqil, the GI Classics Category Lead, for providing insight on the Cake Wars update process for this article!

Translations Team: Forum Focus

By V3riity

The Mineplex Translations Team (TT) was created by dedicated volunteers with the goal of translating the network in order to make it more accessible to users worldwide. The team is currently breaking over 20 language barriers with the potential of more languages to come. TT has since been working on a major project — releasing live translations on the Bedrock server. As of November 25, 2019, the Bedrock project translations have been completely up to date and available for use on the Bedrock server. The Bedrock project was unofficially discontinued, as the project remains complete until the team is provided with more Bedrock content to translate.

On September 30, 2019, a new team position was added: Scouts. The Scouts department was created to test the live translations to make sure that the translations are displayed correctly. However, this position has just been revamped! With over 50 team members and growing, TT has decided to take on a brand new project.

On December 8, 2019, the team officially began translating the website and scouts and translators directed all of their attention to the forums. This shift in focus will allow for the availability of Mineplex translations services for all players on the forums, regardless of in-game platform.

For more information about how the new Scout positions work, I asked the lead manager of the Translations Team, TobiGoro, some questions regarding the shift. He explained that Scouts are people who test the implementation of the translations on the Mineplex website by examining different modules on the website such as groups, profiles, and conversations. In the past, during the Bedrock project, the scouts were asked to go in-game and test out specific features including cosmetic menus, player tips, waiting lobbies, and, most noticeably, all of the games on the network. The scouts also logged missing or broken translations which allowed for speedy fixes. Today, the scouting process remains rather similar,

in the sense that scouts are still asked to go to the website and essentially "click as many buttons as possible" to ensure that the formatting is consistent. Management provides a direct connection between the Scouts and the developers through Wanderer and the format that our scouts follow to log their findings on the website makes it easy to provide fixes to any errors they may come across.

At this point in time, there has not yet been a bilingual scout on the team, so the requirements for bilingual scouts remain the same as those for unilingual scouts since the nature of their work does not hold them responsible for any of the translations themselves. The bilingual scouts would do the same work as any other scout, but they are able to report back to management with incorrect translations, should they find any. To test the website, scouts simply change their language under account preference settings, which is available to all users. At the moment, 20% of the translations that the team is working on have already been released live! These translations are mainly displayed on profile pages, profile settings, conversations, and parts of the BBCode guide page. The translations are sorted alphabetically by internal keys

associated with them, so the team is not translating entire sections at a time. As a result, only parts of some areas are translated, but this will change as the team progresses. New batches of translations are scheduled to be released every fifth week!

The translations are currently only applied to "static" parts of the website, meaning that they do not include any staff member activity that must be read or comprehended properly. For now, only the website's user interface will be translated, but TT will be working on expanding to more information-heavy areas of the website in the future which will possibly include the content of announcements and threads. In terms of website moderation, one can hope that it would lessen the amount of players creating help-section threads in foreign languages because they will be able to find answers elsewhere.

For more insight about the change, I spoke to two scouts who have been directly affected, Li1a and Cheezeburgerfan, as well as xSalted, who joined the team as a scout after the change, in addition to TobiGoro.

What do you think of this shift and why?

L1la: "It's great! If there's an opportunity to translate something as big as the forums, it's a lot of work for translators but it definitely pays off. There are a lot of new aspects to focusing on the forums, but there are still similarities too. In that sense, it isn't a huge change, but I'm still adjusting to the differences. There are even benefits, such as not having to actively play a game while 'scouting,' but there are also more difficult parts of the job, such as navigating some of the different settings and buttons on the forums."

Cheezeburgerfan: "I think it's great that the website is being translated since I have noticed some people writing forum threads in different languages, so I know it will be helpful for them. It's not really a big change for me, my job will remain basically the same: looking for missing translations or general errors when the translation strings are implemented, except that now this will be done on the website instead of the Bedrock server."

xSalted: "I feel really good about the shift! I think expanding our horizons to allow people who don't speak a certain language to access more parts of our community without such a hassle is a huge step in the right direction! I joined the Translations Team after the website translations started, so it felt really awesome to be able to almost immediately jump into the action myself. I'm personally very excited to see this shift in its full completion, and I hope others are excited too!"

TobiGoro: "I still can't put my arms down, honestly. In the past, the Translations Team faced a lot of difficulties providing new strings, which left the team without work for several months without much news. This new project is about three times larger than the Bedrock project, so we have been secured with work for a good while — and this only applies to the internal website strings. Once we are finished with those, we plan on extending our translations services to other parts of the website such as rules, FAQs, and announcements."

Q: How do you think this shift will impact the community?

L1la: "I think this will bring more of the community to the forums and make more players feel comfortable using the site. It'll help people to navigate the

forums and even consider becoming active website users."

Cheezeburgerfan: "I think that this will be great for the community since it will allow everyone easy access to the forums and improve community interaction."

xSalted: "Since more players will be able to use the forums to their full ability, I could see more ideas and opinions being shared with others simply because more people have easier access to the forums! Furthermore, I do think that this will bring the community even closer, as this is opening a door to welcome in many more of our current players who love Mineplex! Personally, I see this as an amazing opportunity for the entire community. Translating the forums allows more people to access a part of Mineplex that is quite underrated in my opinion, and also one of my favorite parts of the network. It's amazing to be working on this and being able to share that enjoyment with the other players!"

TobiGoro: "I'm having a difficult time seeing how this could impact the community in any way other than good. The website is, in our opinion, close to being just as important as the in-

game servers. This is where community members go to search for news or help that they could not have found anywhere in-game other than a staff member. Our main goal is to make the Mineplex network available to a broad demographic, and we see the translation of the website as a big leap in the right direction."

Q: What aspect of the forums will benefit most from this change?

L1la: "Having the website translated will inspire more players to use it for communicating with people (i.e. messaging, groups, profiles, etc.), so I'd say the social interaction facet, but it'll definitely impact other areas of the forums as well."

Cheezeburgerfan: "The rules are planned to be translated eventually, which will be really helpful for people who don't know English since it is very important to know the rules, I think this will be beneficial tot the community."

xSalted: "Everything! I'm having a hard time picking just one. As I said before, I do believe that this will allow for more awesome ideas to be tossed around, and overall make the forums even more active than before. There is a ton of

potential whenever new players join the forums, as it's a way for you, no matter who you are, to express how you feel about the server and advocate for any changes you are passionate about making!"

TobiGoro: "The only thing that will change is the difficulty of navigating the website for foreign players, and we hope for the better! We have yet to find a way to translate the content of announcements and threads, but we are working on expanding to as more information-heavy areas of the website — as many as we possibly can."

A big thank you to L1la, Cheezeburgerfan, xSalted, and TobiGoro for taking the time to speak with me about the Translations Team's new forum focus. Overall, the team seems to be feeling pretty good about its new project and will be working on that for quite some time. Not only will the website be more user-friendly for foreign players, but it will also lessen the load on those who find themselves answering the same questions or going out of their way to help foreign users navigate their way around the forums. The team's direct and undivided attention to the forums is making things easier for users worldwide one word at a time.

Sub-team showcase: Recruitment Assistance

By neotheater

The Recruitment Assistance subteam (RA) operates behind the scenes, and is full of extremely hard-working individuals who assist the Recruiters with their duties. Since it is a staff subteam, applicants must be Moderators or Senior Moderators to apply when applications open. In order to become a Recruiter in the future, joining this subteam is a requirement. The RAs help out with the selection of new staff members who will be joining the staff team as Trainees or reinstated as Moderators. They work closely with the Recruitment team to ensure that only the highest-quality applicants make it to the acceptance stage by commenting on applications, attending interviews, and conducting observations on potential Trainee candidates! The team is famous for the close-knit relationships that the members have with each other and the Recruiters, along with the familiar atmosphere of the weekly Recruitment meetings that take place. AyyNick and Wolfayy are two of RA's newest members. Below, these two will provide insight about the team and their experiences on it.

AyyNick: "I'd have to say my favourite part about the team is helping Trainee applicants work hard and eventually achieve their goal of joining the Staff team! It's so much fun to support people along their journey, and see them work towards becoming a Trainee and helping the community. The feeling when they get accepted is just indescribable, I'm mainly proud of them though. "

Wolfayy: "My favourite part about being on the recruitment assistant team would be the meetings and interactions we have. I must say recruitment is a team where communication is key. I absolutely love going to the meetings as after we play games with each other. It's so much fun, and being able to interact with everyone makes it even better!"

Recruitment Assistance was introduced back in early 2016 replacing the team before it, the Apps Team. At the time,

the Apps Team was a group of 10-15 Staff members who reviewed Trainee applications and gave their opinions on applicants in order to slightly lessen the Recruiters' workload. Staff members could join the Apps Team as Trainees, Moderators or Senior Moderators. The implementation of Recruitment Assistance gave Moderators+ the opportunity to do even more! It became more focused on people who were aspiring to become Recruiters in the future, and training them on how to be successful regarding every aspect of the team. It subsequently became mandatory to join in order to become a part of Recruitment, rather than applying directly to the Senior Moderator team. Recruitment Assistance had a brief period when it was removed in mid-2017, and was replaced with a program called "Junior Recruiters", which was somewhat similar to how RA works in the sense that they were focused on training to be Recruiters in the future. However, after the program's trial, it was decided that Recruitment Assistance worked better for the team, so it was reintroduced in April 2018 and has been around ever since!

The team was divided into two sections, Bedrock and Java. Both Bedrock and Java Staff members can become a part of RA, but specialise in only their respective version's team. For example, Bedrock staff members would become Bedrock RAs training to become Bedrock Recruiters, and Java staff members would become Java RAs focusing on the Java recruitment process. In January 2020, a decision was made to merge the two versions' teams together to further the productivity of the team. Due to the change, all RAs had to adapt to handle the two workloads and learn more in order to function efficiently as a newly-merged team. I decided to ask WinteryOsprey38, who was a Bedrock RA at the time, how she felt about the Bedrock/Java merge.

WinteryOsprey38: "I'm all for the Bedrock and Java recruitment merge. I feel like I get to do more for RA now because I'm able to give my opinion on both Java and Bedrock applications. We don't really get that many Bedrock applications as we do for Java, primarily due to the younger player base. The merge has enhanced my Java knowledge since before then, I wasn't as familiar with the platform. I've also been finding myself wanting to go on Java more so I can definitely say that the merge has brought me closer to Java."

Applications for this cross-platform team were last opened by the team lead, Islendingurinn, on the 18th January 2020, and new RAs were accepted onto the team on the 1st February 2020 after a lot of careful consideration. The newest members of the team are still in the early learning stages of becoming a Recruiter, and they are all in close contact with their RA mentors (experienced Recruiters who guide them forward). They will be growing their skills over the next few months, becoming better and better by the day in pursuit of becoming a Recruiter in the future. RAs must demonstrate a lot of hard-work and dedication over the course of their time on the team, and once they show that they are worthy of a promotion, they will be promoted to a fully-fledged Recruiter. You can find a list of all current RAs here!

With Recruitment Assistance being such a well sought-after team to join, it can be quite difficult to actually become a member. Just like becoming a Trainee, it requires submitting a carefully crafted application and having an exceptional interview that makes you stand out from the crowd! Many people are unable to make it onto the team on their first attempt. However, by demonstrating perseverance by showing continuous passion is the single-handed best way to be accepted onto the team. If you are someone who's thinking about one day joining the RA team but are not too sure if you should actually apply or not, I asked some of our current team members if they have any words for any aspiring RAs to motivate and inspire others to follow in their footsteps!

AyyNick: "For anyone wanting to become an RA in the future, I would recommend you work hard on proving to the Recruitment team you'd be a good fit, and honestly just be yourself because everyone is so welcoming."

GoofIt: "My best advice to give to you is something I learned along the way: Always have a mindset that allows you to welcome all types of people, and most importantly be someone with thick skin ready to make or break someone's life long goal. Good luck to you all!"

WinteryOspery38: "If you are ever given the opportunity to apply, I'd say go for it! Being an RA is such a rewarding experience as it also allows you to improve on your application writing skills and communication skills. The workload is also manageable and doesn't take too much time out of your daily life."

Wolfayy: "GO FOR IT. This team is nothing but a blast! The workload is extremely enjoyable. If you're debating on applying for RA or not, just go for it. Not to mention names, but I know someone who wasn't at all interested in the team and ended up falling in love with the team and she's now a Recruiter! So my top tip is just to go for it!"

Recruitment Assistance is a team full of like-minded individuals who strive to help the Recruitment team select the best candidates for Trainee. The majority of them are aiming to become Recruiters in the future, so let us wish them the best of luck on their journeys! If any community members are planning on applying for Trainee, there may even be an RA at your interview! If you want to learn more about the team, be sure to message either Islendingurinn or any other members of the Recruitment/ RA team. They are always around and happy to answer any questions you may have!

Caption the Image
By Marzie

May is here! Cinco de Mayo, Mother's Day, and other events are right around the corner! We understand that most people are stuck inside and are unable to go out and celebrate these events, but here at Mineplex, we are going to do our best to help you through it.

Your friends invite you to a game of Wizards on Mineplex and while playing, you spot a group of Mineplexian fairies on an island. As you approach the fairies, they all hold out flowers for you. They are speaking in a language you cannot fully understand...what are they saying?

Have a good caption for the image? Submit it here.

In the April edition of the Newsletter, we provided this image:

Here are our favorite captions for last month's image:

Ender_Rivka: "Ahhhhhh!! Those leaves keep on scratching my bald head!"

Animalll: "Hey kid, do you want some dye in clans?"

wattywatty14: "(1) they need to add more flowers to the game... (2) Yes, I'm a nitwit. Yes, I like flowers. No, I'm not withering away... wait where's the Wither Flower?"

Impact Poetry
By AGLThree

Welcome back to Impact Poetry: May Edition! For those unfamiliar with the concept, the Impact Poetry contest is a great opportunity to display your writing talents — with a themed poem written in a certain style — and to read through the lovely work of fellow community members. The rules are simple:

Your original written content does not have to be relevant to Mineplex but must follow the network's rules.

Your poem can be done in any style as long as it fits the line constraints.

Your poem must be submitted before 11:59pm EST on May 20th, 2020. You might notice that this is five days earlier than normal — the deadline has been changed to better suit the process of creating the Newsletter each month and ensure that no submissions go by unnoticed.

This month, the theme will be a little bit broader in order to provide a little more freedom with the topic of your poems. Please write a poem about something/someone that you appreciate or brings you joy. In exchange for such an open prompt, the style of the poem will be a little more limited: a haiku series. A haiku series consists of two or more haikus, which are three- line poems written in a 5-7-5 syllable pattern. Submit your responses here.

Prizes:
1st Place - 3 Mythicals
2nd Place - 1 Mythical & 1 Ancient

Last month's prompt was Planet Earth and the form of poetry was a freestyle. Here are our two winners from last month!

1st Place:
By: NotEnder

"A World Alight"

Consider the pale blue dot awry amongst the stars,
Gaze upon a gleaming sphere between the Sun and Mars.

Dive into the stratosphere and watch a world alight,
With marshes, meadows, coral reefs, and tundras all in sight.

Peruse the fields of marigolds or orchids in the ground,
Sequoia trees and bamboo leaves in forests that astound.

Desert dunes with fennec foxes, camels, and some shrews,
Volcanic ashes, pumice stone, limpets, and microbes too.

Polar bears traverse the frozen ice sheets led astray,
Crested penguins and harp seals cross snow and waterway.

Hark! The angelfish swim by and often within schools,
The click of dolphins rushing past and urchins laid like jewels.

Pristine waters and bright blue skies, all much to endear,
Chirping birds, mellow gusts, with much more to overhear.

A planet worth saving, to be clear.

2nd Place:
By: FabianTuck

"Divided We Fall"

Solitude was the day of April 22nd,
Earth Day was concerned,
Many people were worried,
While Earth Day hurried.
As if it was adjourned.

Many say;
Divided we fall,
But together it's a law,
Where we lay.
Epidemics abide,
While Earth Day survives,
But now we're at our final doorway.

No more panic I ensue,
As we all owe it to you,
Earth Day survives,
While doomsday arrives,
As if we've just pulled through.

April Staff Statistics
By AGLThree

This month, we wanted to issue a huge welcome to all the new staff members who joined us and say thank you to all of the staff members who have sadly resigned for all of their hard work for the network.

Java Trainee
April 4th: ChrissyTheFish, iKassy, Klobko, pwess
April 11th: Linegraph, Loofii, okDamien, Valiha
April 25th: 1tem, Alpfa, d9_, Finova, ItsFree, Jxliee, Mwry, oopsieitsdan, Rilau, Stormiiee, Vytas, Zayta

Bedrock Trainee
April 4th: CodenameSarvyyy, Ruffybear, ShadowWolfZoe
April 11th: i0nblink
April 25th: dqrkmqtter, MoonLight9826

Java Mod
April 4th: dualkong, SpamL
April 11th: ddgolfer04
April 18th: WowCaleb, Mitsoko
April 25th: oCassi, Tours, xEspeon
April 27th: unforgetful

Bedrock Mod
April 11th: Degagelemming95, unknitsunnn
April 18th: LT Tombstone 77

Sr. Moderator
April 25th: Exclipse (Clans Management)

Resignations
April 4th: Morere
April 12th: rqil
April 18th: Cousinss (Builder)
April 19th: dallarth
April 21st: CaptainPigmans, Degagelemming95

1st Year Milestones
March 2nd: Bboy2003, Coyly, lukafin
April 20th: Evgeen

2nd Year Milestones
March 3rd: GrandpaNguyens
March 31st: Ralfie

3rd Year Milestones
April 21st: Marzie

4th Year Milestones
April 8th: Block2Block

7th Year Milestones
April 26th: Tortelett

Meet the Team

AGLThree: Hola! I'm AGLThree and I lead the Newsletter Program! I'm currently a Sr. Mod on Recruitment, a CMP mentor, and an RPA member. I'm a Grey's Anatomy fan and enjoy doing ceramics. My true main goal in life is to get the Connect 4 gadget on Mineplex.

Tortelett: hi I made the pdf
Celebrating 7 years at Mineplex!

Nolawn: Hello gamers! I'm Nolawn and I'm a writer for the Newsletter. I'm currently a Community Manager and the Ideas Team Lead here on Mineplex. You'll most likely see me playing some Nano Games on the network or discussing ideas on the forums. Most importantly, I love food and sleep.

Spoiler: Hi! I'm Spoiler, an 18 year old writer and editor for Mineplex's newsletter program. I am currently a freshman at Stony Brook University as a geology major. In the distant future, I hope to pursue graduate school. Feel free to check the "information" section of my profile to learn more about me!

Meet the Team

Arjun: Yo! I'm Arjun and I'm a Rules Committee member and Sr. Mod under Recruitment. I spend most of my time playing games on the server and dedicating my efforts to my subteams. I'm a pretty competitive player who's always down to play some games, so if you ever see me around and wanna play some PvP games let me know!

Sophie_OGrady: I'm an editor for the newsletter, the Game Insights arcade category lead and an ex-staff member. You can find me around the forums and chatting on the discord!

jxcb: Yo, I'm the GWENXPERT Jacob, and I help to write and edit articles for the Newsletter Program each month. I'm a member of Quality Assurance and a few other subteams. If I'm not handling an escalated appeal or a bug report, I'm either screaming in a voice call or listening to Billie Eilish & blackbear.
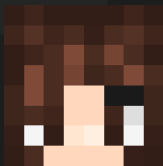
Marzie: It's a me, Marzie! I am an Ex-FN and a current Event Squad member that runs Staff Events, Content Creator Events and does Website QA/Feedback things for most of my time. On the side, I also do Forum Mod, Reports Patrol Assistance, Ideas Team, Newsletter (writer, ex-editor), CCC, and I also Co-Lead CMP. Learn my entire history with Mineplex and more about me on my profile in the information tab.

Meet the Team

EmmaLie: Hiya! I'm Emily and I'm that one weirdo who loves lollipops and doing stuff for the community. I'm currently the admin of Community Management & the Event Squad, so you'll see me a lot in-game, especially in EVENT-1. Outside of Mineplex, a lot of my time goes toward family, friends, Netflix, and Overwatch.

510bike: Hi! My name is 510bike, and I'm currently a writer and editor for the Newsletter! I'm also currently a Sr.Mod on the Social Media team, and I am a member of RPA and FM. Outside of Mineplex, I'm into martial arts, photography, and mock trial! Feel free to say hello if you ever see me around!

neotheater: hey! i'm neotheater and i'm a srmod on recruitment and rpa. recently also got accepted onto this team called 'newsletter' as a writer..? also, i have a bad sleeping schedule:)

Meet the Team

WowCaleb: Wow, it's Caleb! Let's pretend I didn't say that and start over - I'm a Moderator and a writer for the Newsletter. You'll most likely find me in my natural habitat playing Nano Games, or posting over on the forums. If I'm not on Mineplex, I'm probably banana boating or kayaking down the local river! Be sure to stop by and say hi if you ever see me around!
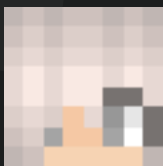
V3riity: Hi, I'm Ver (I have a complicated name history, you can feel free to use anything listed under my information tab ^-^)! I'm a community member who was recently accepted as a writer and editor for this Newsletter Team! I am also the Spanish proofreader on the Translations Team and an ex-Quality Assurance tester. I mostly play on Bedrock but I just started testing the waters on Java Edition as well :) I like to make art and I have played competitive soccer for most of my life, but my main passion is language study.
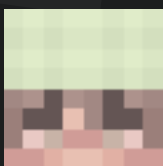
chhase: hi!!!! i'm chase, a mod here at mineplex, a member of the reports patrol, a forum moderator, and an editor for the newsletter!!! when i'm not busy, my favorites things to do are watching movies, going hiking, and going on drives with the windows down. also, i'm very bad at pvp so don't even.