

# Should we teach an old game new tricks?

Mat Hardy & Sally Totman

*School of International & Political Studies, Deakin University*



# Background

## History

- ⦿ Running since 1993
- ⦿ Run at UNSW, Macquarie, Deakin, Charles Sturt, George Washington, Uni Texas at Austin
- ⦿ Deakin is current home

## Status quo

- ⦿ Duration 2-3 weeks
- ⦿ WWW walled garden
- ⦿ All interaction online
- ⦿ Text-based, low-bandwidth

# Problems?

- Visually tired
- Basic looking
- Lack of social media and 'modern' applications
- Some instabilities with IE
- Need to remain non-public
- Chat functionality

The screenshot shows a Windows Internet Explorer browser window displaying an email interface for 'Middle East Politics Simulation'. The browser's address bar shows the URL 'http://leah-ler.cse.unsw.edu.au/meps/login.php?ral'. The page title is 'MEPS : US - CIA'. The interface includes a navigation menu with 'Mail | News | Chat | Diary | Roles | Profiles | Scenarios | Links | Contacts | Options | Home'. Below the navigation is a search bar for 'Mail for US - CIA' and a 'Folder: Inbox' dropdown. The main content area displays a list of emails with columns for 'Sender', 'Sent', and 'Subject'. The selected email is from 'zahar' with the subject 'Zahar: Hamas Panel Position'. The email body contains text discussing the Israel-Palestine peace solution and the role of Hamas. The bottom of the browser window shows the Windows taskbar with the Start button, system tray, and clock showing 11:50 AM.

Sender	Sent	Subject
tantawi	May 13 10:44	Egypt's position paper
lieberman	May 13 10:16	Israel position paper
berlusconi	May 13 09:24	FWD: Italy - Position paper
berlusconi	May 13 09:06	Italy - Position paper
nasrallah	May 13 07:07	Hezbollah Position Paper P1
cia	May 13 05:34	Conference paper-Panel 2
alqaeda	May 13 03:50	Alqaeda in AP position panel 4
allawi	May 13 03:02	Position Paper - Ayad Allawi
khameini	May 13 02:37	Iran's Position Paper
bouteflika	May 13 02:03	Algeria Position Paper
zahar	May 13 01:42	Zahar: Hamas Panel Position
un	May 13 01:41	Panel 2 Position Paper
ahmadinejad	May 13 01:40	Position Paper-Iran
hague	May 13 01:08	Panel 4 Position paper.
hague	May 13 00:33	Panel 3 Position paper.
Assad	May 13 00:33	Syria Panel 2
clinton	May 12 23:12	Clinton Position Paper
clinton	May 12 23:06	(no subject)
sarkozy	May 12 23:04	French Position Paper
iaea	May 12 22:29	Bushehr 1 Nuclear Leaking

Messages 1 ... 20 of 184 total Next>

**Subject:** Zahar- Hamas Panel Position  
**Sender:** Palestine - Hamas - Mahmoud Zahar

The Israel-Palestinian Peace Solution:

Since the 1960s, Palestinians have encountered acts of ruthless, violent aggression from Israel in an unprecedented attempt at demolishing Palestine and its great people. Israel now claims that they are willing to negotiate with Palestine in an attempt to arrive at a peaceful solution, despite the fact that they continue to show aggression towards our people. Over the past fifty years, Israel has killed thousands of innocent Palestinians, hoping to weaken Hamas' commitment to establishing Palestine's rightful homeland in the Middle East. Hamas believes that they are carrying out the will of Allah, and will not stop using force until our goal is achieved.

Peace between Palestine and Israel is not feasible with Israel's current attitude. We are not willing to negotiate on any level, in ways which would compromise our obligation to Allah and our people. We are also not willing to work with a nation that would be nothing without the intervention of the United States. The west's influence on the Middle East has been nothing but negative, and as long as they are involved in Israel's affairs, Hamas will not be.

Israel claims they are dedicated to promoting democracy, yet they continue to act violently when they do not get what they want. Why should Hamas be willing to work with hypocrites? The answer is simple: We are not. Hamas has never and will never support or deal with any state who implements democracy as their chosen form of government. Hamas' stance has always been as such. Hamas has also never denied our acts of violence on behalf of establishing our rightful homeland, unlike Israel who has preached peaceful negotiations yet continues to act in a contradictory manner. We stand firm in our quest to institute and regain our homeland and are committed to our means of accomplishing our goal.

MEPS MEPS  
MEPS MEPS  
MEPS MEPS  
MEPS MEPS  
MEPS MEPS

Logged-in Roles: bbc; Biden; cia; control2; Erdogan; karzai; lieberman; mi6

Done

Internet

115%

start

11:50 AM

# Chat crashes

## Middle East Politics Simulation

[Mail](#) | [News](#) | [Chat](#) | [Diary](#) | [Roles](#) | [Profiles](#) | [Scenarios](#) | [Links](#) | [Cont](#)

**cia1-->** Enters the conference  
(2 mins ago)

**control21-->** Enters the conference  
(1 min ago)

**control21-->** Yes?  
(1 min ago)

**cia1-->** Wanted to ask a question about role profile  
(1 min ago)

**control22-->** Enters the conference  
(1 min ago)

**control22-->** sorry got logged  
(1 min ago)

**control22-->** what do you need to know?  
(0 mins ago)

**cia1-->** how long does it need to be?  
(0 mins ago)

**control22-->** Have you read the instructions?  
(0 mins ago)

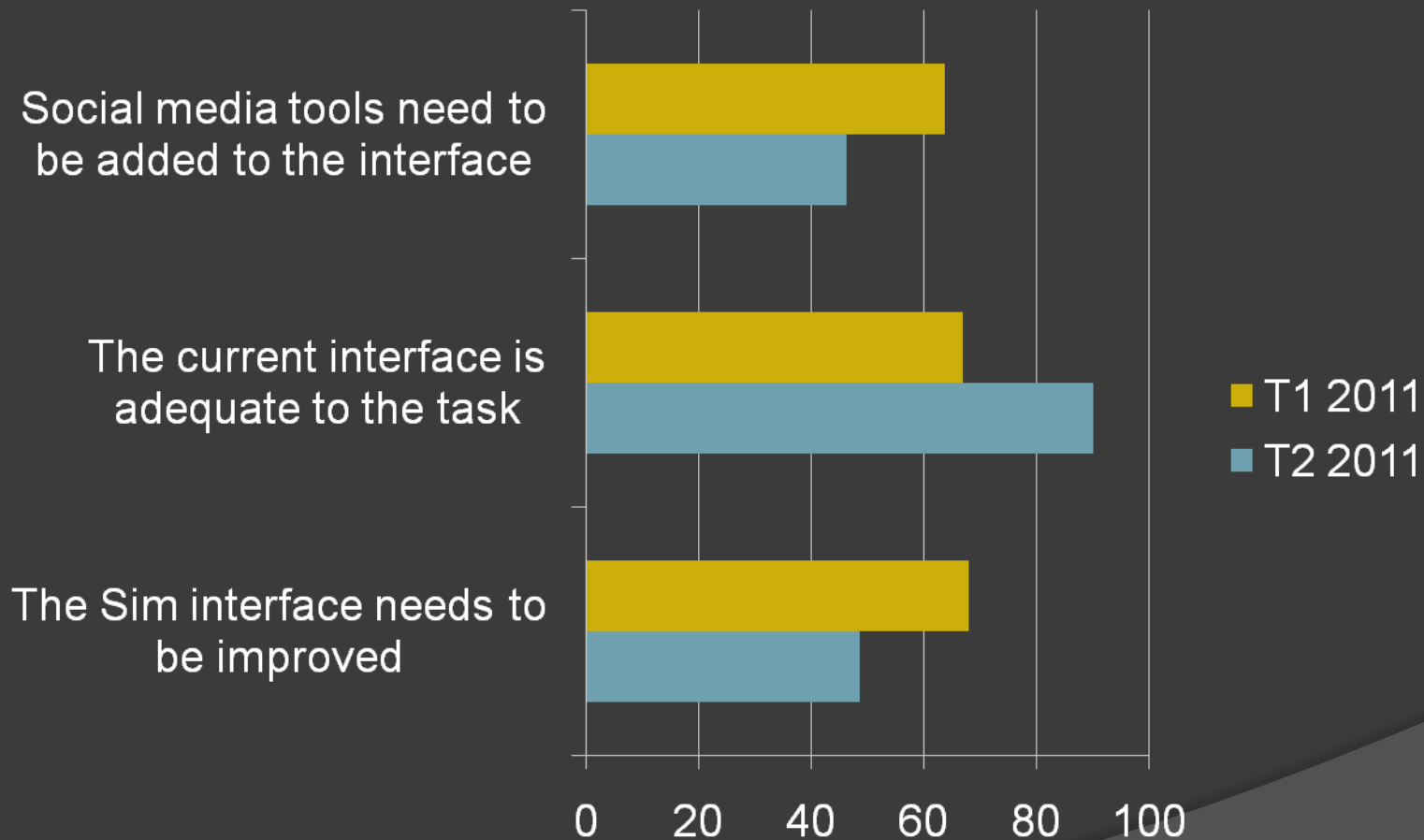
- Source of most complaints
- Chat more necessary now than ever
  - Security
  - Real world

# But they still love it

How would you rate the MEPS as a learning experience?	Excellent= 70%	Good = 30%
MEPS compared to traditional assignments?	Much better = 80%	Better = 20%
Did MEPS contribute to your overall understanding?	Yes = 97.5%	No = 0%
Was your overall experience positive?	Yes = 97.5%	No = 2.5%
Would you recommend the MEPS to others?	Yes = 100%	No = 0%

T2 2011. n = 41

# Tweaking the chat



# Findings

- Students accept low 'bling factor' ...
- ...if the overall value of the task seems apparent
- Broken tools are more annoying than absent ones
- Reflect the world you simulate!





Mat Hardy

[hardy@deakin.edu.au](mailto:hardy@deakin.edu.au)

Dr Sally Totman

[sally.totman@deakin.edu.au](mailto:sally.totman@deakin.edu.au)

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