

A Temporary Trip to Another Dimension

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Euphoric speed...carnage and destruction...nonstop adrenaline rush. If any of these words excite you, then you're in luck. On Friday, the Chicago based franchise, Virtual World, opened its gates to the city of Las Vegas. This trendy virtual reality center has a forty person staff, which I found to be very hospitable and helpful.

The air-conditioned lobby is adorned with "historical" photographs, game-related weaponry, and television monitors. The central part of the lobby has been named "The Explorer's Lounge." In this area, tasteful Victorian chairs and marble tables allow individuals to sit and discuss their gaming experiences. Toward the back wall lies a bar, which serves a wide range of savory foods as well as alcoholic refreshments. Near the bar is a computer terminal which is connected to CompuServe. From this terminal, you can converse with gamers at other domestic Virtual World centers. The monitors located on the walls allows you to view scenarios unfold as gamers blast each other to bits.

Innovative touch screens let you see the schematics of some of the craft used in the games. Finally, there is a souvenir shop located next to the ticket counter. Below is a description of the two games that are in effect at Virtual World.

Battletech

As my number was called from the P.A., my friend and I strolled into a briefing room. There we met an instructor who showed us a short film, which set up the scenario that we were about to experience. Following the video, we were prompted by the instructor to choose our call signs. Determining my call sign didn't take very long: Rampage.

As we were led into the containment bay, I noticed the stylish layout of the battle pods, which were painted in hues of obsidian and cloudy gray. The instructor led us down the row of pods and slid the hatches open for us to enter. Inside was a dizzying array of advanced equipment, which he took substantial time to describe.

Once we were ready, we sat in our pods, shut the hatches behind us, and peered into our monitors. We were instantly swept into a combat zone, which was peppered with dozens of virtual structures. For the next ten minutes, my friend and I were immersed within a full-scale war.

Throughout the encounter, we traded missiles and machine-gun fire with the two opposing human "Mechs" (Gigantic human controlled robots). When it was all said and done everyone emerged from their pods and walked out into the debriefing area. There we came face to face with the human adversaries that we had so desperately fought. As we peered at the monitors, I began to snicker, realizing that I had won the game. And I can prove it with the laser printout, which recorded the battle in its entirety.

Red Planet

Essentially the same equipment and procedures are used in both games, but the Red Planet experience is of a wholly different nature. Battletech's excitement draws from being able to obliterate your opponent with a wide array of heavy weaponry. On the other side, Red Planet features only minor weaponry, tight gutwrenching maneuvering, and breakneck speed racing. Personally, I had a lot more fun with this game than Battletech.

Here are some of the occurrences on my "Virtual Graphic League" log:

•06:59 Rampage fires and hits Rocky in South Isolation Door Area.

•07:06 Rampage score another lap.

•07:11 Rampage delivers broadside to Rocky in South Well Head 2.

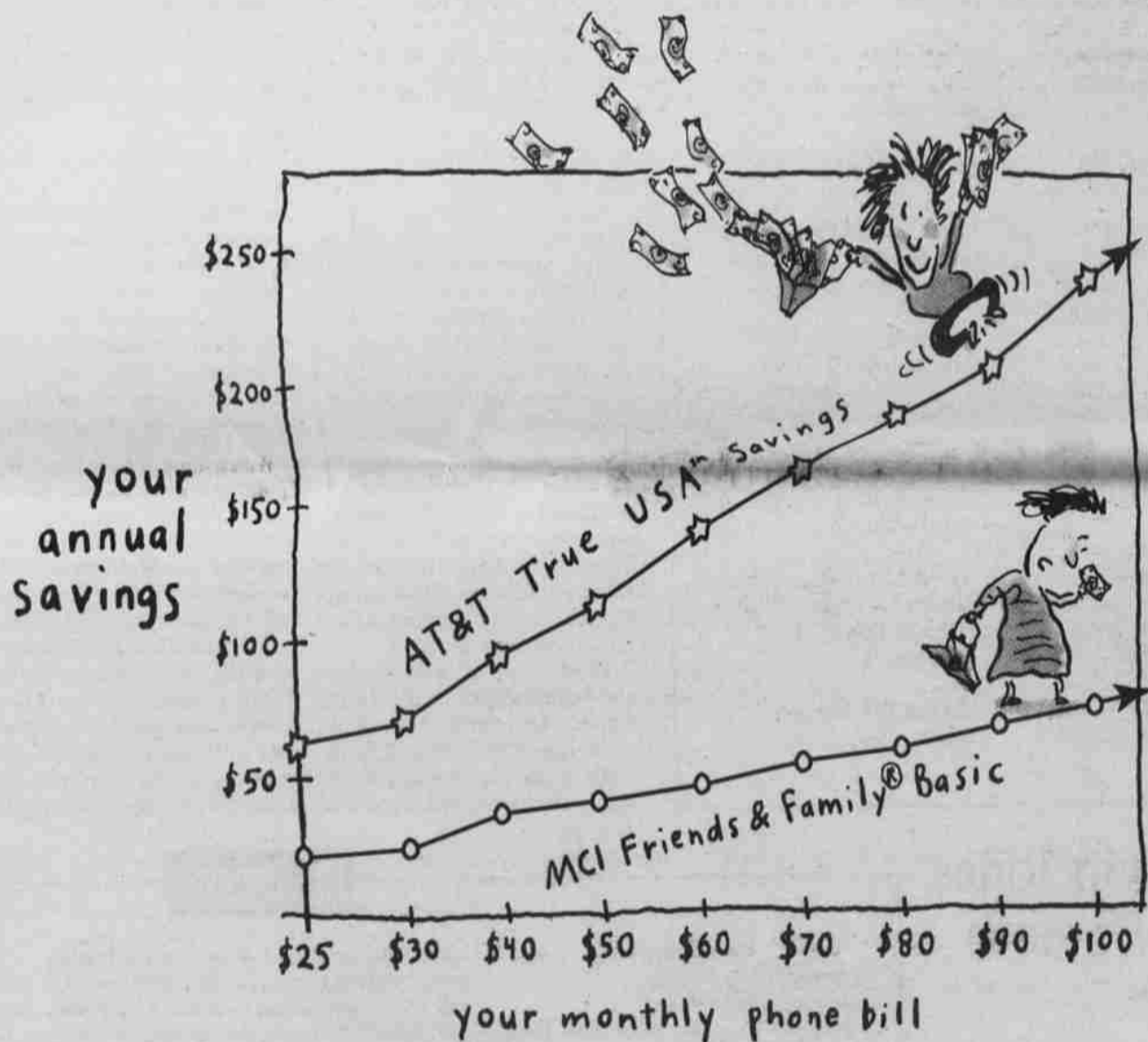
If you love to drag race and knock slow drivers out of your way in real life (or in your fantasies), then Red Planet is definitely the game for you. If you are afraid that you might become too good at these games, don't worry. The scenarios can be modified so that there are more controls to learn and the scenery is more disorienting. Even still,

Virtual World plans on making it possible to compete domestically in any of the games. That means that with "Sightlink", you and a friend could duke it out with people in Dallas, Chicago, San Diego, and Boston, just to name a few.

Specifications
Virtual World
3053 S. Las Vegas Blvd
(702) 369-3583
Opening Hours
Sun-Thurs 11-1 a.m.
Fri & Sat 11-3 a.m.
Prices
Mon-Fri, Before 5 p.m. \$7.00
Mon-Thurs, After 5 p.m. \$8.00
Friday After 5 p.m. \$9.00
You can also rent up to 32 pods for a full hour. Call for Reservations.



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It's true—if you live off campus, AT&T True USASM Savings really could save you more. Just look up your average monthly long distance bill on the chart, and see for yourself.

Now here's why. AT&T's and MCI's basic rates start off about the same. Then, with Friends and Family, MCI advertises 20% off your long distance calls, but—here's the catch—only if they're to MCI users who are also on your calling circle list. Truth is, two-thirds of most Friends and Family members' calls aren't to those selected people. So the average discount you end up seeing on your bill is only 6%.* Not the 20% you expected.

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So take a good look at the chart (you can ask a math major for help) and check out who's saving you what. We think you'll find you could be saving a lot more with AT&T. Call 1 800-TRUE-USASM. And get all the savings you expect.

1 800-TRUE-USASM

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**Discount off AT&T basic residential rates. Available in most areas. Certain exclusions apply.