Virtual Tucker Hotel

LXtra

Issue Twenty-Three

http://www.ustream.tv/channel/LXtra

http://tuckerverse.livejournal.com

Looking Back

After a few months' break, the Virtual Fan Lounge was reborn as the Virtual Con Suite for Corflu Zed, held in Seattle over the weekend of Friday 13th to Monday 16th March.

The main innovation from last year was that we actually had two streams underway for at least part of the convention, with one webcam upstairs in the Consuite and another one downstairs following the programme items. This gave viewers a choice of what to watch, although several people (including, I have to confess, myself) tried to watch both at the same time. Hey, fans are slans, right?

As with last year, we kept an (almost) complete transcript of what was going on in the Corflu chat rooms over the weekend. As I'm not 100% sure everybody realised that we were logging, I'm not going to publish them on a web-page or any other kind of public forum. But, if any interested fan wants to ~~know what we were saying about them~~ see it, I'll happily e-mail a copy of the transcript on request. Fair warning: the total transcript is 18,500 lines and almost 180,000 words...

Looking Forward

After the success of the Virtual Con Suite at Corflu this year, Steve Green and myself are planning to do some webcasting from this year's Eastercon at Bradford, LXCon, under the LXtra label. This is not an official part of the convention, but we have discussed it with t'commitee and agreed a sensible set of privacy guidelines for what will be, we believe, the first attempt to webcast from a British Science Fiction convention.

LXCon – and hence Lxtra – takes place over the weekend of Friday 10th to Monday 13th April, 2009. We are still building our exact schedule for the weekend, and will post it before the convention on the web at http://tuckerverse.livejournal.com

Caveat: All of these plans are subject to us getting a sufficiently good internet connection to be able to stream video live from the convention. However, assuming everything works, we will be aiming to stream video from a selection of panels, and we will look into streaming other parts of the convention as well, especially if we can find any interesting people to speak to.

However, based on our experience with Corflu, you are likely to find other fans in the text chat room pretty much at any time over the weekend.

Joining the Virtual Consuite

To use the chat-room for LXtra, just go to either our livejournal community at http://tuckerverse.livejournal.com or the actual ustream show page at http://www.ustream.tv/channel/LXtra

On the left hand side of the page is the live video feed – replaced by a slide show when there isn't anything happening. On the right is the actual chat-room. You can see what everyone else is typing in the top window, and add your own contribution in the smaller box at the bottom.

You will be assigned an initial user name in the format "ustreamer-12345." If you'd rather change this – to your real name, livejournal name, or whatever – you can do this by clicking the "Sign Up" link at the top to register for free. Some people have been slightly put off by

the amount of information that the registration form asks for, which I can empathize with. But registration is entirely optional – you can simply stay as "ustreamer-12345" if you prefer.

Alternatively, we have discovered another way of changing your screen name without having to register. Simply type in the chat window

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/nick your_chosen_name
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The main constraints on this seem to be that:

a) Your chosen name must be one word (i.e. including hyphens or underlines, but not spaces)

b) If your chosen name is already in use somewhere else on ustream, it will get a random number added to the end to make it unique.

Technical gubbins

You will probably need at least a low-spec broadband connection to watch the Corflu Zed video stream. (Dial-up users in the past have reported that the video gets very choppy without a broadband connection – but the text chat room still works.)

If you are using an internet connection at work or college, be aware that the chat room uses port 6667, which is often blocked by work or college firewalls. Mainly because systems administrators know that it is used by chat room software – so asking them to unblock it is unlikely to be successful! Home users should usually have no problem, however.

Further Information

For more details about Eastercon in general, see the LX2009 website at: http://www.lx2009.com

Art Credits:

Front Cover: The Cedar Court Hotel, Bradford, as listed in Google Street View. Thanks to Chris O'Shea for the link. LXtra logo by Steve Green.

And There's More...

The concept of a virtual con suite seems to be taking off, with various ideas floating around for linking events to other conventions:

Anticipation 2009

Cheryl Morgan and Lloyd Penney are currently in the very early stages of discussing doing some webcasting from this year's Worldcon in Montreal, probably based around the Fanzine Lounge. More news on this when we hear anything further.

Corflu 2010

The convention that started it all comes to England in 2010, and a Virtual Con Suite is very much intended to be part of the event. Ian Maule is already investigating the options on behalf of the committee.

Fandom 2.0

More generally, see also the Fandom 2.0 ning web site, set up to discuss issues around "Fandom in the Age of Social Networking" (i.e. Web 2.0) at http://fandom2.ning.com/