



Happy-Friends-Home

1. What Do You See?

You start the game by selecting a home and family from several stock choices or custom options.

The entire game takes place in the house and yard of the home. The house is a "roofless" cut-away view. The house and furnishings are tile/grid based; your viewpoint and the objects rotate in 90 degree increments. The people in the house, on the other hand, are surprisingly lifelike. They wander about, playing with the gadgets in the house, sitting on the furniture, and eating donuts. They appear a little lazy.

People come to the door of the house. If somebody answers it, there might be a brief "conversation," or maybe they'll come on in and sit down. Time passes, people come by; not a lot gets done. When they run out of donuts, somebody might go over to the phone and order a pizza, which is delivered immediately.

2. What Do You Do?

Somebody has to get this sorry excuse for a family into shape. That's where you come in. You can directly control each family member in turn (but not the visitors). You move them about by clicking and watching them come. If you click on a gadget, like the TV, your character will walk over to the TV and turn it on. Then he'll probably watch for a while, at least until he gets hungry or bored. You're not helping much yet.

You can get all of your family members doing something productive at the same time. Send some into the bathroom while another cooks breakfast, and another fetches the paper. Feed them all a good breakfast, and send them off to school or work. Then do some shopping through a catalog or on the home computer.

When somebody comes over, you can start some "canned" conversations with them. You might ask them to do something for you, or you might just talk about sports. You can introduce two of your friends.

Over the long term, you keep up with the maintenance chores, go on outings (school, work, job interviews, shopping, visiting), start projects, practice the guitar, play cards, and throw parties. Depending on your bank account, you can remodel and furnish the house in grand fashion.

You can set up daily routines and weekly chores for each family member, to relieve yourself of the repetitiveness. You can even "fast forward" time to zip through the sleeping hours, or when the house is vacant, or when you're content with everybody's scheduled routine or their natural behavior.

3. What Is the Point?

Beyond the behaviors described above, the entire household is running under a complex simulation. How you manage your family determines how successful you're going to be and whether you're going to be able to afford a grand home and throw killer parties.

The simulation is based around building the three *Pillars of Value*:

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| Home | The house and material belongings. "He who dies with the most toys wins." A bigger house and more stuff not only costs money to buy and keep up, but also increases the maintenance burden in the form of chores. The simulation keeps track of your net worth and available cash. |
| Friends | The simulation tracks the friendships (or animosity) among your family members and outsiders. It's important to have friends; maybe they'll do you a favor when you need one. And nobody likes to party alone. |
| Happiness | This is an intangible (but scored) value of free time, low stress, education and enrichment, creative expression, and hobbies. |

The simulation will be tuned so that you must make balanced progress on all three pillars to really get ahead. Any lagging factor will tend to hold back the others. Most activities trade off one of these values for another, but sometimes you can use the strength of one pillar to "hoist up" another; such as when one of your good friends gives you a great tip about a job opportunity.

The simulator will also distinguish between short term and long term factors for each pillar: toys that depreciate fast vs. remodeling that appreciates; superficial friends you bribe with gifts vs. long-term relationships; eating chocolate vs. being thin and fit.

4. Why Is It Good?

"Why Do I Care?"

You identify with *your family*; their happiness is in your hands, and you live vicariously through them. Set up your house and residents to mimic your real-world family, or build your dream house and pick any group of housemates you want. See if you can attain the "better things in life."

Direct Control

You can "inhabit the body" of any family member; your influence over outsiders and the objects in your house is through them. Interactions with objects are "fire and forget:" you click on the object, and your character walks over there and starts an activity. You can start off an activity for each family member, and watch them all do your bidding at once.

Open Ended

Ultimately, you decide what your goals are, and how they are accomplished. There are measurable "scores," such as the net value of the home and the "happiness quotient," but you decide what kind of life your family has, and where it will lead them.

The home architecture is almost completely open-ended. You have extreme flexibility in remodeling and furnishing the house, although you'll find that some designs work better than others. You'll also find that some friends are more helpful than others.

Accessible

Right out of the box, you can pick a canned house and family, and sit back and watch them wander around, doing what they please. It's also easy to "buy" some stuff for the house, and plop it down in there, to see if the little buggers go interact with it. You might want to start with donuts. *How can we design it to be robust in the face of incompletely built environments. They shouldn't die if you haven't installed barrooms.* You can also remodel the house without even controlling a character. And controlling the characters is easy enough. You'll have fun playing with the toys, phoning for pizza, and having little "conversations." You can even make-believe what the characters are saying.

Long-Term Play

There are a vast number of starting conditions; choices of homes, of family members, and of combinations of these. You can also try to end up with different success scenarios: a family of rich, stressed yuppies, scholarly fine artists, or living with your band in a wanton party house. Each requires a different approach to making money and friends, and living well.

Broad Appeal

One obvious goal is to "make my people happy." This is considered to be a strong appeal factor for girls and women. Also on the soft end, the game is plenty of fun if just treated as an "Erector Set" or a "Doll House," without ever getting into the Sim. This should let us hit the younger players, and we provide a spectrum of play as kids advance their skills.

On the more hard-core side, your long-term strategy unfolds only as fast as you can race through time, so aggressive use of the "fast forward" feature is key. But you can only do that safely if you've got some good, thorough routines scheduled for your family's chores, education, guitar practice, and (most importantly) a good breakfast every day.

Simulated
home computers

play video
game consoles

I-4 write 9
p.224 parlor
play-in.

creative
writing

scripts

stories

dancing
to music
videos

lyrics
to songs
injected
in conversations

musicals

Sitcoms

injected
jokes
around

There's also lots of eye candy, especially in the party scenes. Everybody likes an aquarium, try one full of lunatics. *Simulate the movie "Queen of Hearts", in which an insane asylum's lunatics break out and inhabit an abandoned town.*

Leverage Our Success

Project X was designed from day zero to leverage its success in the market, and it has stayed true to the *SimWorld* concept.

- Already, plug-in furnishings and gadgets are supported, containing their own graphics and interactive behaviors, and their effects on the Sim. This lets us give away "freebies" that extend the game in different directions, so-called *website bait*. The life-span of the product can be extended through such incremental enhancements and extensions. → Provide simple authoring tools for free.
- Sequels and variations in different settings and with different characters can be developed economically by reusing the "engine." A *SimTribe* idea has been suggested as an example. Source to good examples.
- The scale of Project X buildings and interiors provide us with an opportunity to complement *SimCity 3000's* exterior views. → *Sim Dead Concert*, *Sim Rainbow Gardens*, *Sim*
- The characters in the game have individual looks and personalities. If we're good, we can make the market appeal of some of these characters extend well beyond the game. [Cf the lead character in *Sparkle High*.] → see PKD's "Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch" *MUST* ensure strong third party plug-in development.

See Gryffon Butcks - legs-like sets of building bricks? Source to good examples. *MUST* ensure strong third party plug-in development.

Internet

→ heard a story about somebody who went to the computer store to buy a "Netscape" and was surprised and disappointed that he needed to have a computer to use it.

The add-ons have great potential; they can provide very diverse extensions of the content, and the actions, in your house. You can get some from our Web site. The home computer prop can connect to our Web site. In fact, when you "shop" via the computer, you can be selecting add-ins from the original installation or our Web site seamlessly. → Web TV.

You'll probably want to post your best households and most amazing parties. We'll want to develop a freeware applet so anybody can see the hot party action you post to your Web page. → *SimVideo capture, transmitter, receiver.*

As the on-line market continues to develop, the potential for multi-player games based on the character animation and simulation technology is outstanding. The home setting is a natural for human-to-human interaction over the Net. And great parties can draw great sponsors. → Publish your own t.v. station, game shows, news, music videos.

5. How Will It Sell?

This section is a "placeholder" pending review comments from Marketing. We think there is a strong relationship between this design and *SimCity 2000*, with some specific virtues outlined in the previous section. It's clearly a simulation game, with a bit more focus on being "just a toy" if you're not into the Sim.

We feel the depth of the simulation and the human behavior simulators are innovative features, and the architectural tools provide a uniquely open-ended experience. The graphics and animation for the characters will be provided by our new core system; they should be very lifelike and competitive.

To be assessed: How crowded is this market? What is the competition for the title? What are the sales for this type of game (perhaps the sum of the sales for *SimCity 2000* and *Mario Ultra64*)?

Important household items: Fax Machine, Answering Machine, Radio, Mailbox, SimJunk Mail, TV, Stereo, Phone, Record/CD collection, Computer, Games, Manage CD collection, play music on PC, effect sim subtly. elephant, bird, horse. Pets, Dog, cat, gerbils, ant farm, fish, Reptiles, Petri Dish. *Banner ads like on web pages. click to follow URL to sponsor.* *captures 3-D object motion in view of camera. transmit URL of models, and positioning information. Player reads and renders geometry.*

Enable third parties to develop plug-ins easily.

Don't prohibit the development of sex, violence, gambling plug-ins.

Ratings system for plug-ins? Voluntary, not centralized. Maybe more important than "security" in public's mind. Cryptographic signatures, and identifiers so you can look up reviews on reputation of the publisher.

6. What Will It Take?

Cross-Platform UI and graphics framework	Well under development
Dialog box definition language	Well under development → Java . COM. Bongo?
Tile-based graphics for house, furniture, and terrain	Well under development
Behavior simulation language, interpreter, editors, and "tree tracer"	VI featured in <i>SimCopter</i> Editors on Mac. Substantial enhancements to come. COM plug-ins allow you to write primitives in Java.
Behavior "trees" and personalities for all characters	Substantial content development work
Architectural tools (floors, walls, doors, windows, furniture)	Well developed. UI tuned over a long time. Cross platform. Add more eye candy. How How can we integrate tools into the game as play-in 3-D objects.
Object editor (bitmaps, interaction behaviors, properties)	Well developed (on Mac). Several sample objects exist. Publish toolkit-kit make specialized authoring tools. so others can
3D animated characters, motion sequences, complex motions	Core technology; also to be used in <i>SimCircus</i> , and <i>SimCity 3000</i>
Mid-level 3D graphics libraries, work with Direct3D on Win95, "Z-mixing" into a scene background	Core technology; also to be used in <i>SimCircus</i> , and <i>SimCity 3000</i>
3D renderer for Mac and other non-Win95 platforms	Well positioned to integrate "underneath" the mid-level layer.
3D exporters from 3D Studio Max for props, characters, motion sequences	Core technology; also to be used in <i>SimCircus</i> , and <i>SimCity 3000</i>
Motion sequences specific to X	Substantial content development work → Synchronizing body motion with music.
3D assets specific to X	Some furniture exists, substantial other work. → Dynamic motion mixing.
Relationship Sim and conversations	
Household Sim, lifestyle, outside activities	
Party simulation	
Save-game file format, with add-ins	
Simulation timebase (supports animation, simulation, fast-forward of time, "fast carpenters" effect, networking)	Core technology, well developed.
Audio support and "musical skillz"	
UI design and implementation	Chores list, routine scheduling, project to-do lists, object interaction menus. → see pre menu "Personality tricorder," aka "Heads-Up Display." video tapes.