

TEAM A(I)DOL · CMU ENTERTAINMENT TECHNOLOGY CENTER · SEP 11, 2026



Week 3 Update

Design × Technology × Business × Ops

You are not managing an idol. You ARE one.

1 · DESIGN

Design

Answering last week's two questions with the redesigned opening — then where V1 stands, feature by feature.

Two questions from last week — and what we changed

Q1

“The two-layer world is too hard to grasp.”

Real world + Idol World had to be understood before anything happened.

Q2

“The opening has no hero’s-journey shape.”

Setup was explained, but the player had no call, no doubt, no threshold.

OUR RESPONSE

One world. Nothing to explain.

- Near future where living virtually is simply normal — no lore, no slogan, no “Idol” label.
- Virtual-ness is shown, not told: teleports, one-tap outfit morphs, floating panels. Nobody reacts.

OUR RESPONSE

Opening redesigned as a hero’s journey.

- The first act now has real turns — ordinary day → call → doubt → stepping on stage — following Vogler’s stages.
- Walkthrough on the next slide; demo after that.

Art this week · UI

Styling



Art this week · Environments & UI



Art this week · Poster & Production Design

Team poster · team photo · production design



2 · TECHNOLOGY

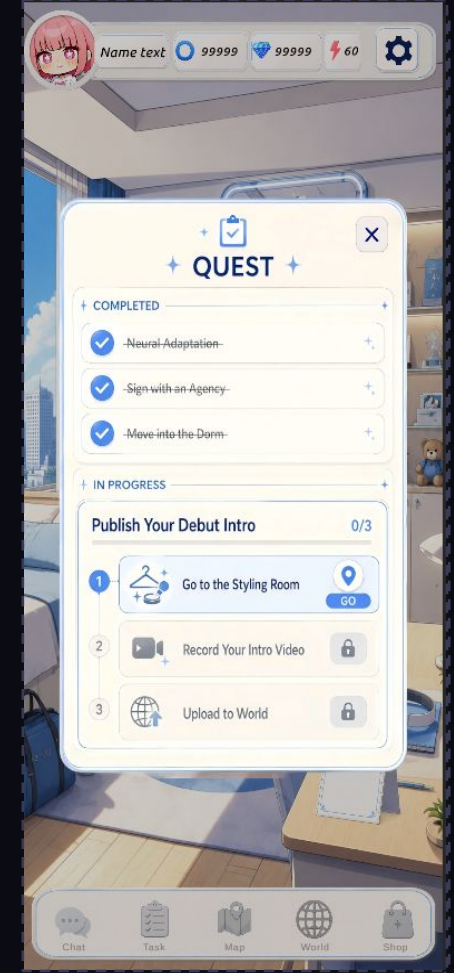
Technology

Backend off localhost and running from a phone. Client rebuilt on the new story. And an answer on using the player's own video.

Onboarding flow: F3 → F4 → F5

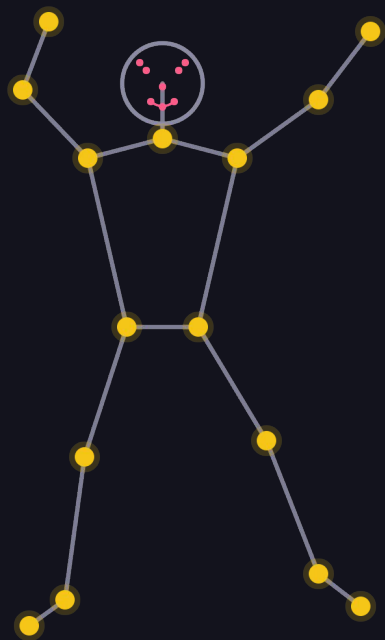
Welcome kit → dorm → debut quest

- F3 Welcome Kit rebuilt: profile → contract → “go to dorm”.
- F4 Dorm in progress — ID card, wallet, quest desk.
- F5 Task Manager scaffolded — the debut quest card.



The character is ours. The player's video only drives it.

Corrected architecture · privacy + legal review updated 11 Sep



WHAT THE MODEL RECEIVES

The player's dance video — motion reference only.
No image of the player in the output.

IN GAME + ON DEVICE



Build

character, our art



Record

phone camera



Send

video + char ID



Generate

model composes



Return

character only

CLOUD — THE VIDEO CROSSES HERE

What changed The character comes from our art library, not the player's face — so the likeness risk we flagged is gone. What remains is the video sitting on a vendor's servers.

Control track kept The fully on-device version — skeleton only, no video upload — stays implemented. Weaker on hand detail, but it proves we evaluated the stricter option.

3 · BUSINESS

Business

Three takeaways from the 9/9 meeting with John Zimmerman.

Three takeaways

01

The theory behind the drive

Why people build a virtual self — and pay for virtual property.

02

Hated is also reach

Fame is non-linear. Players want to be the villain too.

03

The relationship ecosystem

Three relationships, three economic models.

Also: three pillar questions for the spring pitch Why be the idol, not the manager? · Why virtual idols + K-pop idols? · Why loved and hated?

Why people become someone else — and pay for it

Full citations on the Sources slide

THE DRIVE FOR A VIRTUAL IDENTITY

■ Yee & Bailenson (2007)

Your avatar changes how you behave — the Proteus effect.

■ Bessièrè, Seay & Kiesler (2007, CMU)

Players build their ideal self, not their real one.

■ Przybylski et al. (2012)

Games that let you be your ideal self are more motivating.

■ Belk (2013)

Digital possessions become part of the self.

PAYING FOR VIRTUAL PROPERTY

■ Lehdonvirta (2009)

People buy virtual items for status and self-expression, not utility.

■ Hamari & Keronen (2017)

Meta-analysis: enjoyment and social value drive purchases.

■ Mäntymäki & Salo (2011)

Teenagers pay in virtual worlds for social presence.

■ Guo & Barnes (2011)

Perceived value and habit predict real-money spending.

Being hated is also reach

Celebrity earns attention by being liked — and by being disliked. Players will want both.

WHY PLAYERS TAKE THE DARK PATH

- People do online what they wouldn't offline (Suler, 2004).
- Playing the villain sharpens moral sense afterwards — dark play is safe rehearsal (Grizzard et al., 2014).

WHAT THIS OPENS UP IN THE GAME

Nuanced scandals

A controversial line sparks backlash — and \$2B in revenue.

Arbitrary industry

A producer favors or sabotages you for no reason.

Parasocial volatility

Rage-bait, rumors, media cycles, fan toxicity.

Design implication V1 choices should not assume a “good idol”. Open the villain branch.

Relationship ecosystem & economic models

Three relationships the idol lives inside — each monetized differently

RELATIONSHIP	CORE CONCEPT	MONETIZATION
1 Idol vs. Projected Self	Real self vs. curated idol persona.	Merchandising the persona
2 Idol vs. Virtual Fans / NPCs	Synthetic audience, parasocial feedback, algorithmic reach.	Buy reach · reward fans
3 Idol vs. Real Community	Networking, collaboration, competition — online, Spring 2027.	Paid tier unlocks multiplayer

Spring 2027 — multiplayer Visit friends’ quarters · shared public spaces · group MVs · a feed mixing AI bots and real players.

4 · OPS

Ops

Approvals, cost, and where we need a hand.

This week in operations

[Yuelin — confirm and edit; pre-filled from the daily report]

Documentation

- Game Bible updated
- Expense-tracking database set up
- Zimmerman + John meeting notes filed

External

- 9/9 meeting with John
- 9/9 meeting with Zimmerman
- Startup Application submitted [confirm]

Content & Quarters

- Week 1 & 2 blog posts drafted
- Quarters presentation draft started
- Quarter video: opening cut in progress

Some slides are held back

This is the public edition of an internal advisor deck.

Model comparisons, prompts, cost tables, architecture and unreleased design are withheld.

They are published in full in the A(i)dol AI game development playbook, December 2026.