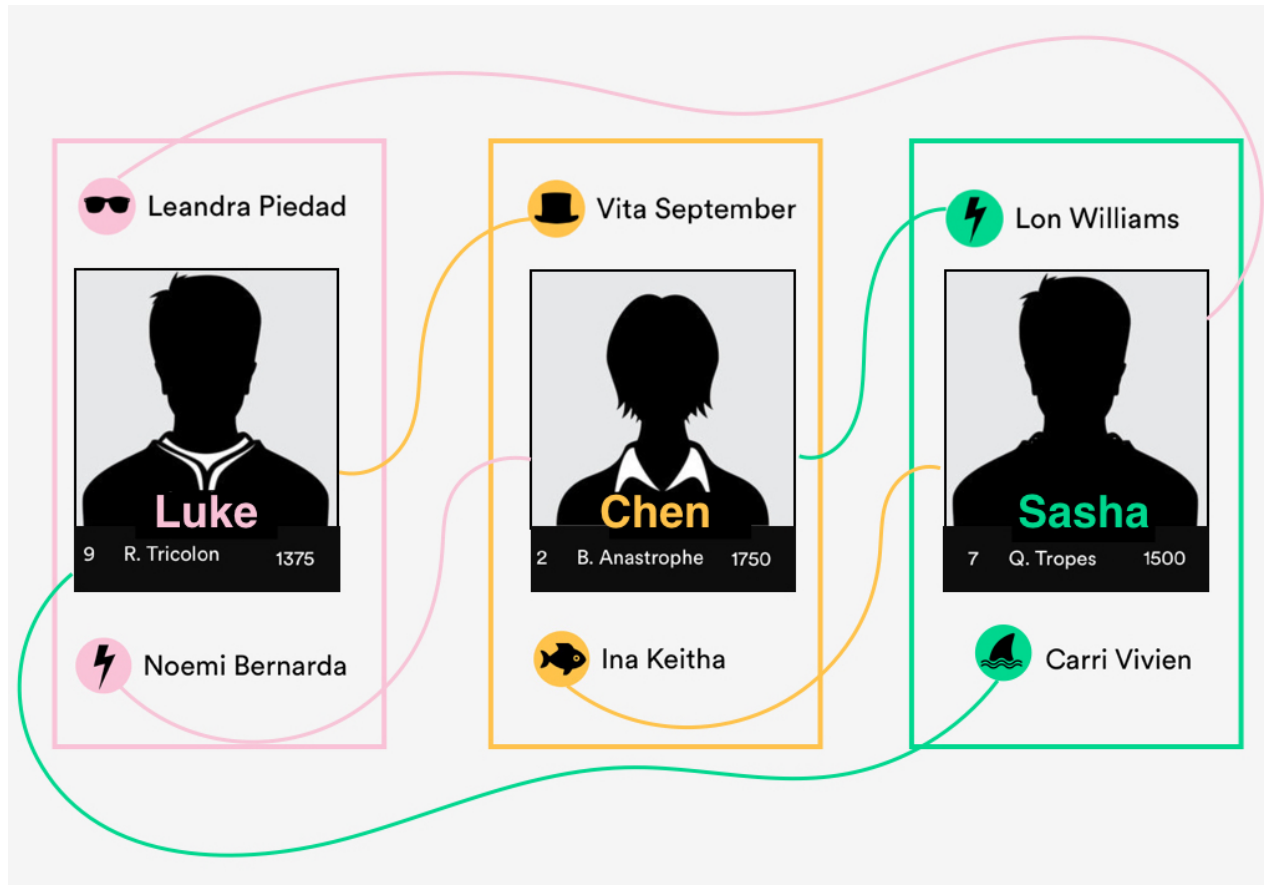


The posts on this blog explore the digital life of the Color Game, a gaming app launched by our lab. Our goal: inventing a universal language without words, and recording its birth in data. To find out more, visit colorgame.net.

Several players told us they were puzzled at the way the Color Game names them — or their friends. They should be! The naming scheme that we set up for the game is quite intricate. It helps us to make the game as anonymous as possible. Here's how it works.



No one in the Color Game appears under their real name: the app never asks for your name and does not store it. Instead, players get two sorts of pseudonym. One name identifies the player on the High Scores board. A series of “contact names” identify the player when playing with others.

The High Scores board name. When you first installed the Color Game, you were asked to choose a pseudonym from a set of randomly generated choices. All such pseudonyms combine one initial with one word: R. Tricolon, B. Anastrophe, Q. Tropes. That name is the one that appears on the leaderboard, where everyone can see it. In our example, Chen appears in second place, as B. Anastrophe. (The last names come from wikipedia’s [glossary of rhetorical terms](#).)

The contact names. That is where things get tricky. To increase anonymity, we made sure that no player is known to her gaming partners by one single name. Instead, a player has many pseudonyms — as many, in fact, as the number of her contacts. In our example, take Chen. She appears on Luke’s contacts list as “Vita September”, but Sasha knows her as “Ina Keitha”. Likewise, she sees Sasha under the contact name “Lon Williams” — not the name that Luke sees when he interacts with Sasha.

Why are we so keen on anonymity? We take data protection seriously (see [here](#) to learn more about the way the Color Game app stores your data, and your rights regarding them). We also wanted to make it as difficult as possible for people to hijack the app for some purpose it wasn’t made to serve.

But the most important for us is making sure that players can't interact outside the app — on messaging apps, on the phone, in real life. The Color Game is about finding ways to communicate through restricted channels — using only the app's symbols and signals.

Tired of hiding behind masks? Let's talk, under our real names, on [twitter](#), [facebook](#), or in the comments below!

(text & figure: Olivier Morin)