

14-year-old CEO makes chemistry a game with 'Elementeo'

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Part whimsical, part educational: One of the 121 cards that make up the Elementeo deck. Credit: Courtesy of Anshul Samar

Age seems to be no obstacle when it comes to starting a business. That's the case with 14-year-old Anshul Samar, CEO of Alchemist Empire, Inc., who invented a trading card game, "Elementeo," that aims to teach chemistry to students in a fun, unusual way.

At the 235th National Meeting of the American Chemical Society in New Orleans, Samar will present his inventive card game. While other 14-year olds play on their Xbox, this precocious CEO hopes to secure

\$500,000 in funding so his Silicon Valley-based startup can begin mass producing the game.

“I have always wanted to show the world that the youth can start a business and have fun at the same time,” says Samar.

Like other popular trading card games, Elementeo casts two players against each other in card-based fantasy combat. But unlike “Pokemon” or “Magic: the Gathering,” Samar says that Elementeo educates just as much as it entertains.

The game is based on a 121-card deck of chemical elements, compounds and catalysts. Every card has an explanation of the element or compound’s uses and chemical properties. For example, the Oxygen card can rust neighboring metal cards and the Copper Conductor card can shock any metals. The oxidation state of an element is used as its attack power, and its physical state determines its movement on the board. The goal of the game is to reduce the opponents electrons to zero through strategic use of each card’s chemical properties.

“Our aim is to combine fun, excitement, education, and chemistry, all in one grand concoction,” says Samar. “We don't want to create a fantasy wizard world or create a boring education textbook world, but combine the two where fun and learning come together without clashing!”

Samar received \$500 in seed money from the California Association of the Gifted (CAG) to develop a prototype of Elementeo. Now, after stealing the show at the entrepreneur conference TiECON in mid-2007, Samar hopes to get the financial backing he needs to mass produce Elementeo.

“You are not a geek or a nerd if you like chemistry,” says Samar. “If people do end up calling you a geek because you love chemistry, don't

worry, those people are going to end up working for you at the end!”

Source: American Chemical Society

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