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Resolutions

One Game to Rule Them All: Lord of the Rings Online and the MMO Market

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The gamer stereotype may suggest that a person who plays online games is a video game addict, spending the majority of their day online, with little social interactions. However, recent research suggest this is not the case (Hartshorne, VanFossen, Friedman, 2012) and it is the social aspect of the game that is addictive, not the game itself (Ducheneaut, Yee, Nickell, Moore, 2006). Massively-Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games (MMORPGs), like World of Warcraft, create an artificial environment that extends beyond the player's physical boundaries. Players of MMORPGs are able to participate in a social structure in the context of a game, and the extent of their involvement will depend on their motivation for playing.



THE STATS OF YOUR AVERAGE MMORPG PLAYER...

BALDING HEAD
OF STAMINA
+3 TO TIME
TRAVEL

ZITS OF DEATH
+4 TO
HUMILIATION.

POWER DRINK
OF THE BLOOD
GOD
+3 TO HEART
DISEASE.

ARMPIT OF
FURY
+5 TO FEMALE
REPELLENT

MUSTARD
STAIN OF
RESILIENCY
+2 TO FOOD
STORAGE

NAVEL LINT
+4 TO
SUPREME
NERDIDITY

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Accumulation, Status	Making Friends	Finding Hidden Things
Mechanics	Relationship	Role-Playing
Numbers, Optimization, Templating, Analysis	Personal, Self-Disclosure, Find and Give Support	Story Line, Character History, Roles, Fantasy
Competition	Teamwork	Customization
Challenging Others, Provocation, Domination	Collaboration, Groups, Group Achievements	Appearances, Accessories, Style, Color Schemes
		Escapism
		Relax, Escape from RL, Avoid RL Problems

(Yee, 2014)

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Motivation is a fundamental element of learning and the motivations for playing online games can be very different for each player, but can be narrowed down into three main categories, achievement, social, and immersion (Yee, 2007). Achievement includes advancement, the desire to progress through the game as quickly as possible, completing achievements and raising the player's status or wealth; mechanics, where the player analyses the rules in order to optimise their performance and competition, competing against other players. Like the name suggests, social encompasses the social aspect of a game, socialising with others, forming long term relationships and working as a team to achieve a common goal. The last category, immersion includes the players desire to discover unknown portions and details of the game, role playing and optimisation, where the player creates a fully formed character complete with back story and escapism, the ability to escape ones real life environment. Researchers have suggested the use of online games evoke players motivations and assist in learning. They give the player the ability to make mistakes and try multiple alternative paths in order to progress to the next stage.

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 arise as well. Once a player or guild has advance through
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 complex battles, a player who ch
 jeopardises the whole
 strategy.

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Achievement	Social	Immersion
Advancement Progress, Power, Accumulation, Status	Socializing Casual Chat, Helping Others, Making Friends	Discovery Exploration, Lore, Finding Hidden Things
Mechanics Numbers, Optimization, Templating, Analysis	Relationship Personal, Self-Disclosure, Find and Give Support	Role-Playing Story Line, Character History, Roles, Fantasy
Competition Challenging Others, Provocation, Domination	Teamwork Collaboration, Groups, Group Achievements	Customization Appearances, Accessories, Style, Color Schemes
		Escapism Relax, Escape from RL, Avoid RL Problems



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Focusing on the social component, teamwork and social structure plays a major role in the success of a team, or guild as it is known in World of Warcraft, and is not dissimilar to that of a team in a business environment. Like a business environment, there are many different guild structures, and these will depend on experience and motivation of the player and the game being played (Hartshorne, VanFossen, Friedman, 2012). With an experienced guild, the structure is similar to that of the business world, players are given ranks and are chosen for their role based on their skill set, experience and personality. As the name suggests, guild leader or master is the role given to the head of the guild. They have administrative control with the ability to add and remove members and delegate guild positions and privileges. This role is comparable with that of a manager. Depending on the structure of the guild, the guild officer has similar role to the guild leader, with varying rights and responsibilities, this can be likened to a team leader. The remainder of the guild consists of guild members, consistent with team members. With each player having a specific skill set required to advance through the challenges or quests, online games create positive social interactions and teach players to be dependant on each other and to work together (Griffiths, M, Hussain, Z, Grusser, S, Thalemann, R, Cole, H, Davies, M, Chappel, D 2011).





Guild structures can be different for each guild, this is just an example (Ceraphus, 2010).

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the use of online games even
stakes and try multiple alternative paths

When a game mirrors the real world in the way MMORPGs do, it's not surprising that some of the same issues arise as well. Once a player or guild has advanced through the beginner stages of a combat style game, the members become more reliant on each other to communicate and to work together for a common goal. In more complex battles, a player who chooses to buck the system and not stick with the predetermined strategy, jeopardises the whole group (Yee, 2006). In a very popular YouTube video, a team can be seen discussing their strategy, and each person's role in the upcoming battle, when mid discussion, a player yells his name, Leeroy Jenkins, and charges in to battle, leaving his guild dumbfounded. With no other choice but to follow, the remaining members head into battle, exclaiming their disbelief at his actions. By the end of the battle, every member has been killed.

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