Real genders choose fantasy characters: Class choice in world of warcraft

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Abstract

Gender stereotypes inflect discussions about character choice in World of Warcraft (WoW), an online multiplayer video game. We interviewed 47 players, 33 males and 14 females, about why they chose their characters. We found the stereotypes contained a grain of truth as stereotypes often do, but that they mask interesting dimensions of gender in character choice.

Full Text:

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World of Warcraft has 12 unique classes. Leveling and gearing each of these characters is enough to fill hundreds of hours. Raider or not, picking a class should be thought of less like trying a different character in a fighting game, and more like sticking with the same save in a Bethesda role-playing game. Instead of focusing on anything interior like abilities, the race choice should be completely cosmetic. World of Warcraft is a behind the back kind of game, meaning you’ll be staring at the back of this character’s head for hundreds — if not thousands — of hours. Pick something you like the look of and goes with your class fantasy. Class fantasy. Once you’ve reached the end game in World of Warcraft, it’s easy to get obsessed with your own performance.