WORLD OF WARCRAFT

The Culture and Language of a Massively Multiplayer Online Game

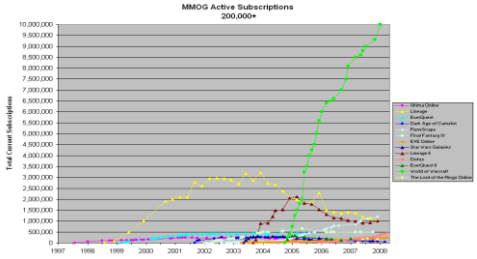
Culture of World of Warcraft (WoW)

- My task is to look at the game culture of WoW as a participant observer.
- The game, culture, social groups, and language will be described.

WoW Facts

- WoW's active membership 10 million+
- This population would make WoW the 15th largest city in the world.
- Members online at anytime exceeds 1million. This is greater than the population of the St. Louis County
- 10 million active memberships at $16.95 a month equals $169,500,000 gross/month.

Population



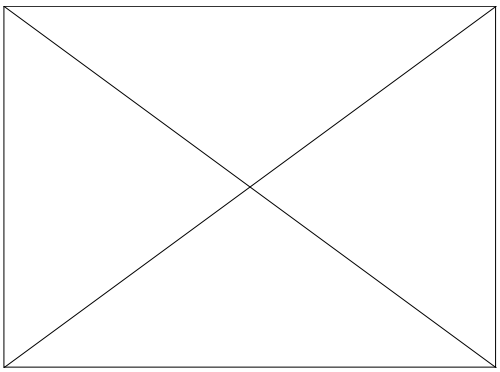
Game Play

- Avatar- virtual representation of yourself.
- Many Races (Humans, Orcs, Trolls, Elves, etc)
- Different factions- alliance (shown right) or Horde.

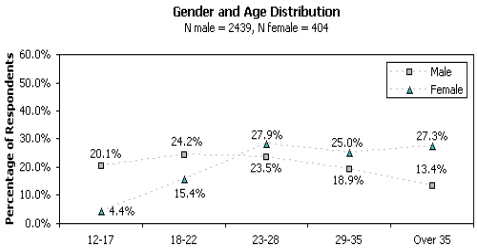
Game Play

- It is an escape from the drudgeries of everyday life.
- Magic, swords, adventures, quests, companionship, power, heroism, villainy, flying.
- One can do all these in WoW!

NORTHREND



Diverse members

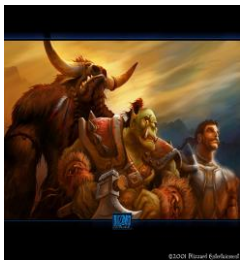


Mythbusters

- 80% of online gamers have an annual income of 35k+
- 42% of all online gamers are female
- 17% Teenagers
- Isolation is a myth.

Social Cohesion

- Game can be played solo.
- Many find the game most enjoyable when playing with others.
- Game is played in groups as large as 50 players working together to bring down a monster.

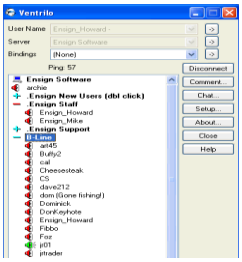


Communication

Communication

- Voice chat - Ventrilo
- Text chat – Forums or in game text
- LAN – tournaments
- Emotes – in game expressions

"VENT"



- Ventrilo
- Allows hundreds of people to chat at once.
- Large groups of people chatting while playing.
- Language use is very different from talking Face to Face.

Guilds

- A guild is a group of people that have banded together on the game.
- Use of Ventrilo and Text communication
- 4 types of Guilds

Guilds

- Raid Guild – strict rules, certain availabilities, main goal to bring down large Monsters.
- Social Guild – Lax rules, chatting while playing main goal.
- PVP Guild - Main goal to annihilate the opposite faction, prejudice against other "races" in the game
- Role Playing Guild – players impersonate their virtual characters through text, voice and emotion communication in the game.

Social Groups

- Being involved in a virtual culture gives the player a positive feeling and a sense of belonging toward a group.
- Concepts such as mutual trust, empathic resonance and a sense of belonging.
- Guilds are what make WoW have a culture.

Other Research

- "the belief that any technology represents a cultural invention, in the sense that it brings forth a world, it emerges out of particular cultural conditions and in turn helps to create new ones" Arturo Escobar 1994

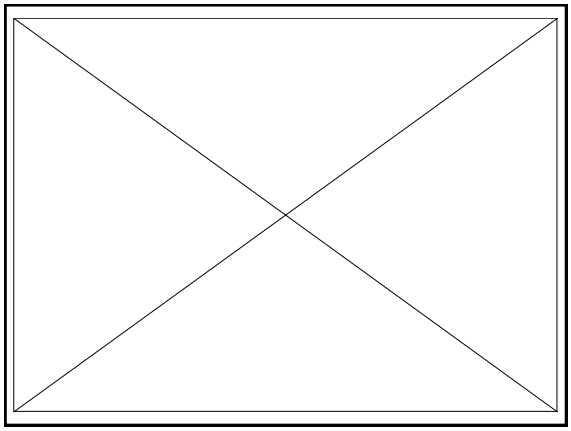
Other Research

- Professor Constance Steinkuehler's research investigates the intellectual work that goes on within games and the cultures of participation that emerge both within their virtual worlds (between login & logoff) and beyond.

Language

- Kthxpzl8
- Roflcopter
- Lol – "lawl"
- Pwn
- Rickrolled
- Diaf
- Few examples of leet speak.

Language

- Many of these slang internet terms are making their way into text by cell phone.
- It's hard to understand what makes Leet speak popular or how it is created.
- These social groups formed on the internet produce these words, out of boredom or typos sometimes.
- This type of language is used outside the game by many of these gamers.

Conclusion