

Documentary Slideshow: Why Women are attracted to Male-Dominated Video Games

By Phoebe Chen



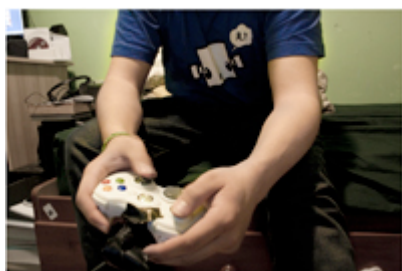
Narrator: Today, gaming is an activity or hobby enjoyed by everyone. But then why is it that people are somewhat surprised that women enjoy this medium of fun? Women make up 40% of all gamers between the ages of 30-45.



Narrator: So why are we sometimes so surprised? And why are video games often times associated with men? Well, the media and society often portray women as damsels in distress, and not fit enough to play competitive first person shooter video games.



Narrator: So why do women play then, if they are in a society that thinks men are the only ones suitable for playing? Well, we shall find out. First, we need to uncover what it takes to be a gamer.



Narrator: Here we have the normal high school student, who plays a couple of hours a week. CNET News states that the gaming industry targets their games towards the younger generation, who were worth \$414 billion last year. Josh Anderson, a high school student at Los Altos High School in California, gives us his take on the phrase, "gamer".



Josh: what i think the definition of a gamer is is someone who plays video games. But there are two types of gamers. One type of gamer is a casual gamer. He or she will play a couple times a week just for fun, or to waste some time. There's another type of gamer who is a hardcore gamer. He plays to compete with other people. He or she probably plays every day of the week.



Narrator: Anderson's definition is quite simple in that it states that people who consistently play are considered "gamers". He says that he is a 'casual gamer' himself.



Narrator: Next, we have Ed Chen, a video game hardware designer. His job is to create the chips in the game consoles, a crucial part in the video game industry. He always spends some of his free time enjoying first person shooter games. Upon asking him for a definition of a gamer, he responded by saying,



Ed: "I don't think there's a clear definition, but to me, a gamer is somebody who treats playing video games as a very serious hobby. So they really enjoy playing it and maybe they are so devoted that when they play, they are completely into the world that they're in. So they spend a significant amount of their spare time playing video games and try really hard to beat the games that they're playing".



Narrator: Chen's description of a "gamer" is someone who is devoted and passionate about their hobby just like any committed dancer or athlete. "Gaming is a sport", Chen says. Next, here is Jenna Leder, a game developer and an a gamer herself. She tells us her definition of a "gamer."



Jenna: "I would think of it with a capital 'G'. And it's probably the stereotype of the more hardcore player, or what's usually defined as hardcore, like people who are playing console games, you know, shooters". Leder also states that, "I kind of object to 'girl gamers' being identified separately from male or standard gamers, because we're all playing the same games, and probably for the same reasons."



Narrator: According to our interviewees, a "gamer" can be anyone who plays consistently and passionately. Not one of them stated that women were not allowed to play or could not play. Now that we have come to terms on the definition of a gamer, and women are included, we can now find out their motives behind playing. Here, Josh explains why he think women like to play. He says it's,



Josh: "the same reason why we (men) play, because they can do things they can't do in the real world."



Ed: "why is that different from men...People are attracted to video games because there's a thrill. It is an alternate reality. First person shooter games transports you to a different reality. So you are right now, either in a war zone, or you are in an alternative world, in a dark alien world, and you are the hero. So the first person shooter games gives you a hero complex. You are the hero in this movie. Now instead of just watching the movie, you are the person acting it out. so it gives you

that reality, and I think that buys to women or men. People do feel that they want to be heroes."



Jenna: "they're attracted to them for the same reason that men are. I don't think having a vagina and a pair of breasts and estrogen and testosterone makes you like different things necessarily. It might attract you to different elements. I know I'm not interested in war games; I don't know if it would be the same way if I was a man...the action, the plight of the gameplay, the graphics, the storyline, you know, different parts of that might be more important to women than they are to

men, but I think it's a case by case thing."



Narrator: As we can see, all three of our interviewee's agreed with each other. Women tend to be stereotyped as "damsels in distress," but behind those gender barriers, they play for the same reasons their male counterparts play.



Narrator: The answer is simple: women play to enjoy themselves and to save an adventurous world that needs their aid and protection.