

Session 12 – IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

Readings

Williams et al. – The Virtual Campus
Consalvo & Harper – The Sexiest of All

Concepts/Keywords -- ?

Goals

- Discuss the tools that players are given to play online
- Discuss how representation in games affects players' positioning in the world

Introduction:

Present papers

Consalvo & Harper – ethnographic study, interviews Female players in 2 MMOs
Williams et al. - content analysis (survey of representation, more quantitative)

Tools to configure one's character are limited, are designed

World of Warcraft - “ugly” males, not able to change body shape

The Sims – offers a lot of flexibility, but also situated (medieval) (players can't wear modern clothes)

As we saw, we can use games as extensions/reflection of who we are (Turkle, Consalvo & Harper also mention it)

Our presence in the Virtual World is not trivial, ones appearance and acts define us in front of others, i.e. attitude, achievements, level, etc.

Example (Consalvo & Harper):

- pretty female characters flirting to get objects rather than obtaining them through skill or work

Q: How do students choose their characters?

Problem with representation:

What is represented is “normal” (dominant)

Ignores variety:

- minorities don't see themselves represented
- people belonging to majorities are not aware of minorities

What role they play also perpetuates myths

Goes both ways – media represent society, society shapes itself according to media

Exemplary tales of heroes in Ancient Greece

What do games tell about us?

- Mostly adult males, in main characters
- females/children/elderly/other ethnicities are less represented
- black people only good for sportsmanship

How do we solve this?

CMS.300 – Intro to Video Game Theory

- Try to vary the work force (more female, black, Latino etc.) → otherwise it's a vicious cycle
- Be aware that there are wider audiences that one can appeal to
- Note audience differences between countries – localization

Advertisements also create audiences

SOCOM ads (UK, US, Japan)

gameads.gamepressure.com

MIT OpenCourseWare
<http://ocw.mit.edu>

CMS.300 / CMS.841 Introduction to Videogame Studies
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