



## Lecture 12: Player Types and Styles

### Aim of lecture

The aim of this lecture is firstly to give a sense of **who**, in demographic terms, play games. We can see that the myth of the typical geek game player exists for a reason: thirty ears ago it was true. Today the picture is different. Secondly the aim is to give an sense of **how** players play by giving an overview of game play types, and give knowledge about the classifications that has been most popular and influential when it comes to game design. Thirdly the emotional reasons for **why** players play are highlighted, leaning on the most recent research on the subject. The overall aim is that these three perspectives will be useful to bear in mind when designing games, since the functional role of the player is the final core of the game design process.

### Overview of content in lecture:

1. Who are the players?
  - a. Players in the late seventies.
  - b. Players today.
2. How do the players play?
  - a. Casual gamers or Core gamers?
  - b. Explorers, Achievers, Killers or Socializers?
  - c. The power gamer and instrumental play.
  - d. Professional gamers.
  - e. Table Top Role player types
  - f. Role players: Self-play or Role Play?
  - g. Player, avatar, character and persona
  - h. Masquerading
3. Why do players play?



## Lvl 0. Mandatory reading material:

*On Game Design*, by Andrew Rollings and Ernest Adams (New Riders 2003)  
pages 38, 41 and 42.

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“Hearts, Clubs, Diamonds, Spades: Players who suit MUDs”, by Richard Bartle,  
1996. <http://www.mud.co.uk/richard/hcds.htm>

**Comment:** First published in *Journal of MUD Research*, which now has the name *Journal of Virtual Environments*. This article is a classic on player types. If you play a lot of MMOGs you might have noticed that game designers have made character classes that are more or less oriented to certain activities Bartle mentions, it's very transparent in SWG.

“The Larper's Vow of Chastity” by Mike Pohjola, page 41 and 42, *Official Knudepunkt 2003 Book – As LARP Grows Up*

You find a small download of these pages on the course web.

**Comment:** This vow is, as compared to the Dogma 99 vow, more concerned with the players performance within the LARP.

The yearly book from the scandinavian role play convention in PDF format, is available 16MB download.

[http://www.laivforum.dk/kp03\\_book/kp\\_book/kp03\\_book.zip](http://www.laivforum.dk/kp03_book/kp_book/kp03_book.zip)

In this book you can also find the Dogma 99 vow at page 20 (by Erik Fatland and Lars Wingård), which is more focused around writing forLARPs.

*Designing Virtual Worlds* by Richard Bartle (New Riders 2003) pages 154 – 155

**Comment:** explains the terms Player, Avatar, Character, Person in terms of level of immersion. The clearest and most useful definitions of this I have read this far.



## Lvl 1. Further reading material for deepening knowledge (not mandatory):

*Designing Virtual Worlds* by Richard Bartle (New Riders 2003)

Pages 151 – 153, is added to the course web, explains Nick Yee's facets

Pages 201 – 202, is added to the course web, on how to do a successful masquerade, or espionage in a VW

Chapter 3 in Bartles book is about Players is excellent. Unfortunately the copy rules make it impossible to put the whole text into the compendium.

*Shared Fantasy – Role-Playing Games as Social Worlds*, by Gary Alan Fine, (The University of Chicago Press, 1983) Chapter 7, "Role Playing and Person Playing", pages 205 – 228

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"Power Gamers Just Want To Have Fun?: Instrumental Play In A MMOG," by Taylor, TL., in M. Copier and J. Raessens (eds.), *Level Up Games Conference Proceedings*. Utrecht: Universiteit Utrecht , 2003.

<http://www.itu.dk/people/tltaylor/papers/Taylor-Powergamers.pdf>

"Are Professional Gamers Different? - Survey on online gaming", by Jeppe Bo Pedersen in *Game Research* (April 2002)

[http://www.game-research.com/art\\_pro\\_gamers.asp](http://www.game-research.com/art_pro_gamers.asp)

Player Types (from Glen Blacow and Robin D. Laws), summary of role playing types by John H. Kim, URL:

<http://www.darkshire.net/~jhkim/rpg/theory/models/blacow.html>

*Why We Play Games* by Nicole Lazzaro, (Game Developers Conference, San José, California 2004)

Nicole Lazzaro is a psychologist who has been researching why people play games, and how to use that knowledge when designing.

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## **Lvl 2. Further deepening (not mandatory):**

*Shared Fantasy – Role-Playing Games as Social Worlds*, by Gary Alan Fine, (The University of Chicago Press, 1983) Chapter 2, “Players”, pages 39 – 71. This text maps out the typical role player in the late seventies.

*The Myers & Briggs Foundation Website*

<http://www.myersbriggs.org/>

Information about the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator Assessment Tool.

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® personality assessment tool is a written instrument that "indicates" a person's likely psychological type. Psychological type describes the different ways people:

- prefer to take in information,
- prefer to make decisions,
- are energized by the outside world or by the inner world, and
- prefer to keep things open or to move towards closure.

***The Story about a Tree or Who Killed Miss Norway***

More reading:

*The Story about a Tree*, May 1998 by Raph Koster

<http://www.legendmud.org/raph/gaming/essay1.html>

*Who Killed Miss Norway*, April 2003 by Tracy Spaight,

[http://www.salon.com/tech/feature/2003/04/14/who\\_killed\\_miss\\_norway/index.html](http://www.salon.com/tech/feature/2003/04/14/who_killed_miss_norway/index.html)

(Note: they will force you to watch an ad before the article is displayed)

Raph's follow-up, *Revisiting the Garden of Remembrance*, April 2003,

<http://www.legendmud.org/raph/>

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