The Norrathian Scrolls:

A Study of EverQuest

(Version 2.5)

Nicholas Yee, 2001

"My husband played this game every night. Every. Single. Night. When he wasn't playing, he was talking about it, and I grew to despise it. Night after night of him being on the damn computer, while I sat downstairs watching the History channel. Out of sheer boredom, I'd go get groceries at 0100, or run to WalMart for something to do, someone to interact with, whatever. When a storm blew out my computer, and the grasping-tail simians at Best Buy took a MONTH to get the right part, I used my husband's computer. He encouraged me to at least check out the game, and I did. I didn't like it, but I played. It gave us something to talk about, and when I finally got my computer back, he asked me to start my own account. I gave in, and did, so that we could spend time together. This was in August of 99. It's February of 2001, and we spend hours - HOURS - every SINGLE day playing this damn game. My fingers wake me, aching, in the middle of the night. I have headaches from the countless hours I spend staring at the screen, and EQ works it's way into many, many more conversations than I'd like. I'm officer/coordinator of a modestly sized guild. I've designed and maintained a website and bulletin board for said guild. Sometimes things happen in game, i.e. being KS'd or dealing with some d00dspeak-spewing infant, and my heart begins to POUND, and I literally shake with anger. This scares me. I'm 30 years old, almost 31, and I'm a registered nurse. I take care of terminally ill patients, and I'm an EQ addict. I hate this game, but I can't stop playing. Quitting smoking was NEVER this hard." [f, 30]

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Notes

Thanks

I would like to thank Doug Davis, Professor of Psychology at Haverford College, for everything he has taught me and for all the support he has given me for the past two years. I would also like to thank Mike Nocifore, Assistant Director of Academic Computing at Haverford College, for letting me use his CGI script to process online forms.

I would also like to thank EverLore.com and EQVault.com for helping me publicize my study. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to all the people who took the time to participate in this ongoing study, especially to those who continue to remain involved in the study.

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"The Norrathian Scrolls: A Study of EverQuest" (version 2.5) by Nicholas Yee, 2001.
http://www.nickyee.com/eqt/report.html

Quotations

Direct quotations from respondents are used in this report. All quotations have not been edited for spelling or grammatical mistakes. No quotations included make direct reference to any named character or player.

Statistical Notes

When information on statistical tests is included in this report, the statistical test used is mentioned first. Degrees of freedom are mentioned in square brackets, followed by the result of the test, ie. T-value or F-value. Means of groups tested are given next, with their respective number of subjects given in round brackets. P-values are reported last. For example, $(T[1079]=-4.96, M_{male}(918)=25.2, M_{female}(163)=29.0, p<.001)$. In a partial listing, "N" refers to the number of subjects.

P-values refer to the probability of the result occurring due to chance alone. A p-value of .05, that is 1/20, is the standard cutoff for statistical significance. Most significant results in this report are significant at p<.001, or less than 1/1000. The word "significantly" in this report refers exclusively to statistical significance.

Personality Notes

N	E	O	**A**	C

The above visual aid will be used to summarize personality data. In this example, the bolded "A" implies that Agreeableness is linked with the question or variable being discussed. Descriptions of the personality scales used are in Appendix I.

Contact

Questions or comments can be directed to: ***contact@nickyee.com***

Methodology and Design

Overview

This project propelled itself in one-month cycles. Each phase involved gathering both quantitative and qualitative data pertaining to questions generated from the previous phase, analyzing the data, and then generating new paths to explore in the next phase. Each phase usually consisted of about 4 questionnaires focused on different aspects of the game. Data from different phases was linked using a participant's email address so that important data, such as a participant's scores on a set of personality scale, need only be gathered once. More importantly, data gathered separately could be analyzed together. The resulting database of information is useful because it allows access to both the big numerical picture and individual qualitative responses. Participants were encouraged to complete as many questionnaires as they felt comfortable doing, and the underlying database structure was described to them briefly so that they understood their continued participation was important.

Participant Recruitment

Participants were recruited over the Internet for this project. At the beginning of each phase, participants already in the database were invited to participate in the new phase through email. At the same time, a standardized message was posted in online message boards and forums that are frequented by EverQuest players.

Participants were also encouraged to tell their fellow EverQuest gamers about the project and to spread the link to the project main page. It is not known however whether this helped with recruitment significantly.

This project collected data from 5 phases in the period between September 5th 2000 and May 5th 2001. These included 13 multiple-choice forms, 7 free-response forms, and 3 Flash-implemented experimental designs. Approximately 4000 individuals participated in the study, and filled out about 25,000 forms altogether. These estimates are generated after the exclusion criteria have been applied (see below). Most multiple-choice forms had at least 1500 responses. There was a participant carry-over rate of about 25% from one phase to the next.

Exclusion Criteria

Below are the criteria used for excluding submissions from the analysis:

- Blank submission
- Duplicated/Repeated submission, by comparing the email address field
- Submission with missing email address field, even if all other fields are completed
- Submission with more than 20% of fields left blank
- Submission with obviously impossible information, ie. age=2, email=anon@anon.com

On Representativeness

Sampling biases and representativeness are important issues to consider in any kind of empirical research. In the months since the first release of this report, I have noticed concerns about representativeness surfacing in several message boards which linked to this study, and also in several email correspondences. One individual presented a well-articulated critique of the representativeness of my sample:

When referring to the results of your study, you say "x% of EQ players are <blank>". However, in reading your methodology, I notice that your study does not choose EQ players via a random sampling method. Instead, you primarily rely on EQ websites and to a lesser extent word of mouth to find your study's participants.

It seems to me that this skews the data heavily in favor of the most devoted EQ players. The casual EQ population who don't bother to read EQ websites will be almost entirely overlooked in your data, even though I'm sure they represent a significant portion of the EQ population. Also, by using the volunteer method to get your participants, you automatically filter out all the EQ players who don't bother to fill out surveys.

Thus I find it odd to derive from your study any implications about the EQ populous as a whole. So the phrase "x% of EQ players" simply doesn't apply; rather, your results reflect "x% of EQ players who read EQ websites and who like to fill out surveys". There are probably some big differences between those two statements.

I would answer this particular critique and similar ones with the following arguments:

1) EQ is one of the few games where going to these websites will help a lot, to the extent where a lot of casual gamers probably frequent these sites as well. For example, consider scheduled server downtime, quest info, class strategies etc. So it's not clear whether this creates a heavy skew at all. In fact, since playing the game necessitates a connection to the Internet on a decent computer, it is probably only a tiny percentage of players who have never gone to an EQ website.

2) Through a correspondence with Sony Online/Verant, I found that my basic demographics match theirs very closely. For example, the percentage of players who are female was 16% for both our data. And average playtime per week was "around 20" for them and mine was 22.

3) Gender and age differences probably don't interact with whether someone goes to an EQ website or not. So we know that female players are more likely to feel that their EQ friendships are comparable to their RL friendships, but this difference probably doesn't only occur among people who go to EQ websites. And in a sense, these age and gender differences are the more important part of the study.

4) And the same for people who don't bother to fill out surveys. They probably don't differ in important ways from people who fill out surveys, in the sense that almost all of the findings would remain the same even if we did somehow take them into account.

5) Finally, since "hours played per week" was one of the collected variables, I can check whether this impacts the other variables I am measuring. So even if my sampling included a very skewed proportion of heavily-devoted EQ players, I am not oblivious to the effects of this skew. On the contrary, I have a good way of determining how severe these effects are.

In essence, I feel that most EQ gamers frequent EQ websites, and that a non-random sampling of these gamers who go to websites does a good enough, though clearly not perfect, job of representing the entire EQ player population. And that while slight skews do exist, that my findings would not differ significantly from a study that was able to take random samples.

Brief Lexicon and Game Basics

Loot – Mobs sometimes drop items and cash when they die. Both are referred to together as loot.

Mana – Magic points that are used to cast spells. Mana is regained through meditation or medding for short.

Med / Medding – Med is short for "Meditation" which spell-casters need to do to regain mana to cast spells.

Mob – computer-controlled creature or monster.

NPC – non-player character, a character that is controlled by the computer.

Spawn – mobs are regenerated as they are killed at fixed places after a fixed interval. The process is known as spawning. Can refer to both the process and the mob spawned.

Zone – Originally referred to the different areas of the world which due to different graphic sets involves temporary pauses as the game loads the new graphic set. This term has also come to refer to the boundary itself, as well as a verb, meaning to escape by crossing zones.

To play EverQuest, the game software has to be bought and a monthly connection fee has to be paid for **server** access. Players create their characters on one of the available servers. Each player can have up to 8 characters on each server. Once created, characters usually cannot be transferred from one server to another. A different copy of the game world resides on each server, and characters from different servers cannot interact with each other. The servers are like parallel universes, where the world and game mechanics are the same, but the people, economy and culture is different.

Characters can be created from 13 **races** and 14 **classes**. Each race has different advantages or disadvantages, such as infravision or low stamina. Examples of races are Barbarian, Wood Elf, Ogre, and Human. Classes are occupational niches that can be chosen, and different races have different class options. Each class has its own set of skills and abilities, as well as starting attributes. Examples of classes are Warrior, Druid, Wizard, and Rogue. Each character has a set of 7 **attributes** that determine its basic abilities. Examples are Strength, Dexterity, Wisdom, and Charisma. Attributes are numeric and each race/class combination starts with a base assignment of each attribute and given 25-30 bonus points to distribute among them during the character creation process. Character **gender** is also an available choice, and has no bearing on internal game mechanics apart from making the character visually different.

The **world** of Norrath is enormous and is divided into **zones** that vary from the snowy peaks of Everfrost, to the desert of Ro, to the swamps of Innothule. The world is separated into 3 main continents (5 with the expansions), and a journey from one end of the world to the other is an arduous trek. Characters begin at different parts of the world depending on their race. Each zone is populated with a different collection of computer-generated creatures, known as **mobs**. The underlying thrust of the game lies in killing mobs to gain **experience** so that the **level** of your character can increase. As you increase in level, you are able to kill more powerful mobs, get more money and items off their corpses (known as loot), and buy better items, so that you can kill even more powerful mobs and get more experience. As mobs are killed, they are regenerated after predetermined intervals at predefined locations, known as **spawning** and spawning sites respectively.

Attaining **levels** gets exponentially more difficult and takes an exponentially larger amount of time. Different race/class combinations use different strategies in killing mobs and gaining levels, and the game is easier (or harder) at certain stages of character development for certain race/class combination than for others. As characters increase in level, it becomes increasingly more difficult to adventure and kill higher level mobs alone. Characters often band together to form **groups** where the characters, of different races and classes, complement each other. Teamwork and grouping were designed to play an important role in the game as it usually becomes tedious to work alone, known as **soloing**.

Communication in the game takes place in a chat panel at the bottom of the screen. Different modes of communication are available, and the text is displayed in different colors depending on the mode. The basic modes are **Say, Shout and Tell**. Saying something allows anyone in the immediate area to see it displayed on their screen. Shouting something allows everyone in the immediate zone to see it. Telling someone only allows the person you tell to see it. The other modes include **Auction, Out Of Character, Yell**, and Guild functions. Auction is a specific channel that players can use to trade items, and is broadcasted through the zone. OOC is for out of character talk and is also broadcasted through the zone. Yelling (by typing "/y") indicates to people in the immediate area that you need help and tells them where you are relative to them. Guild functions allow guild members to communicate with each other.

Guilds are player creations that need to go through a petition and approval process. Any player can try to start a guild. A guild is essentially a club or social group that connects characters together. A guild can have any name that is not already being used. The petitioner needs to get 10 other characters who are willing to approve his or her guild. Then the guild is petitioned in EverQuest's chat server, and after approval is made part of the game on that server. All guild members have their guild names displayed next to their own names in the game. Guilds allow guild members to communicate with one another using the guild chat channel, allow for a sense of group membership, and allow coordination of larger-scale events in EverQuest such as zone raids.

When players **log on** to play the game, their characters start wherever they last left off. To **log off** the game, a character must sit down and set up camp. Setting up camp takes 30 seconds. This is done mainly so people would not be able to log off to end a hard battle. Characters can **die** in the game. When a character dies, the character is sent back to his starting point, known as bind point, which can be changed using spells. The character's equipment and possessions are all left on a corpse where the character died. To get his or her possessions back, a character must retrieve his or her own **corpse**, known as a corpse run. Corpses **decay** depending on the character's level, and if a corpse is not retrieved before it decays, it is lost forever. Some parts of the world prevent corpse retrieval altogether such as dying in a lava pool in Lavastorm.

Although most of the game mechanics are related to combat, there are aspects of the game that have nothing to do with combat. Characters can develop and train in **trade skills** apart from their combat skills. At high enough skill levels, characters can craft magical jewelry, brew potions, or smith banded armor that is otherwise not available in the game. Many characters supplement their income through these trade skills.

RL Demographics

Age and Gender

The average age of EverQuest players is 25.6 (N=1240). Female players are significantly older than male players (T[1079]=-4.96, M_{male}(918)=25.2, M_{female}(163)=29.0, p<.001). Data from another study (Oswalt 2000 [1]) showed that EQ players are significantly older (F[2,226] = 20.98, p<. 01) than Quake or Starcraft players (Tukey HSD, p<.01 for both).

Average Player Age for 3 Computer Games
N starcraft = 84, N quake = 54, N everquest= 91
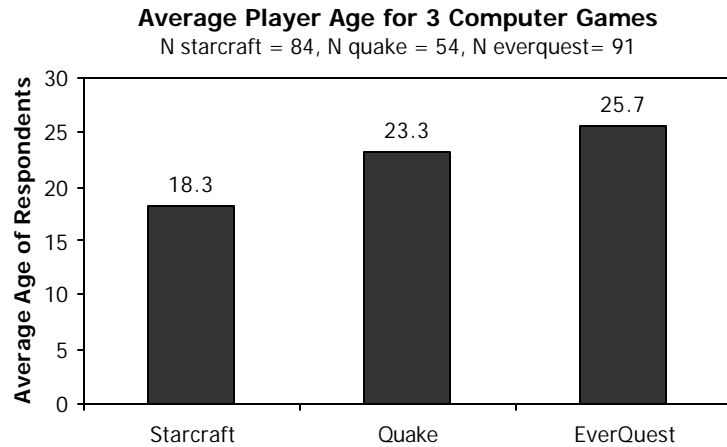
About 84% of EQ players are male, while 16% are female (N=1240).

Occupational Categories

About a third (30%, N=1099) of EQ players are students, but of those who are working, 36% are working in Technology related areas.

Top 7 Occupational Categories
N=1099

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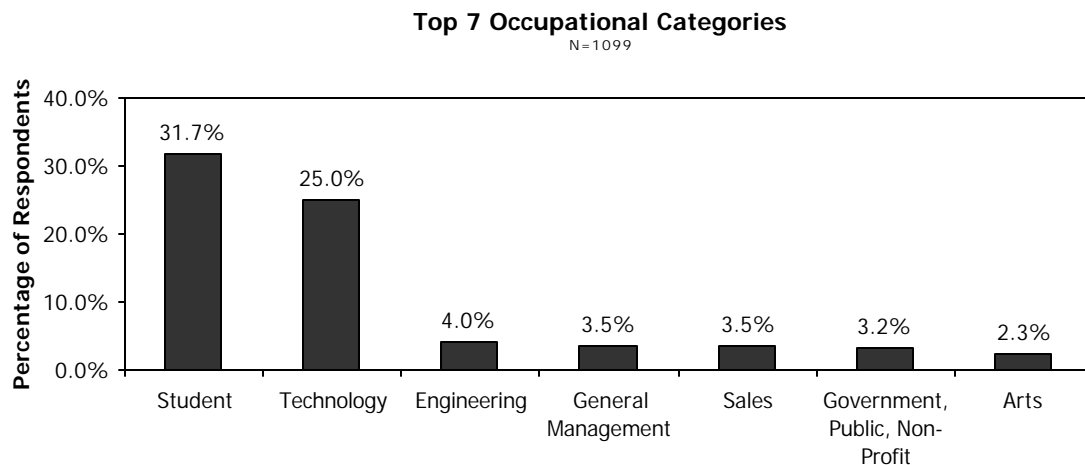
[1] Oswalt, Michael (2000). Transmutations of Self: The Personality of Cyberspace Through the Modern Video Game. Unpublished Manuscript.

Marital Status

About a third (32.3%, N=2473) of EQ players are single and not dating. About another third are single but dating (29.0%). The final third (36.7%) are either engaged, married or separated. Among players who are single, male players are significantly more likely than female players to not be in a romantic relationship ($\%_{male}$(2078)=36.4, $\%_{female}$(370)=13.5, p<.001). Female players are significantly more likely than male players to be either engaged, married or separated (%male(2078)=33.1, %female(370)=60.3, p<.001)

Marital Status
N male =2078, N female = 370
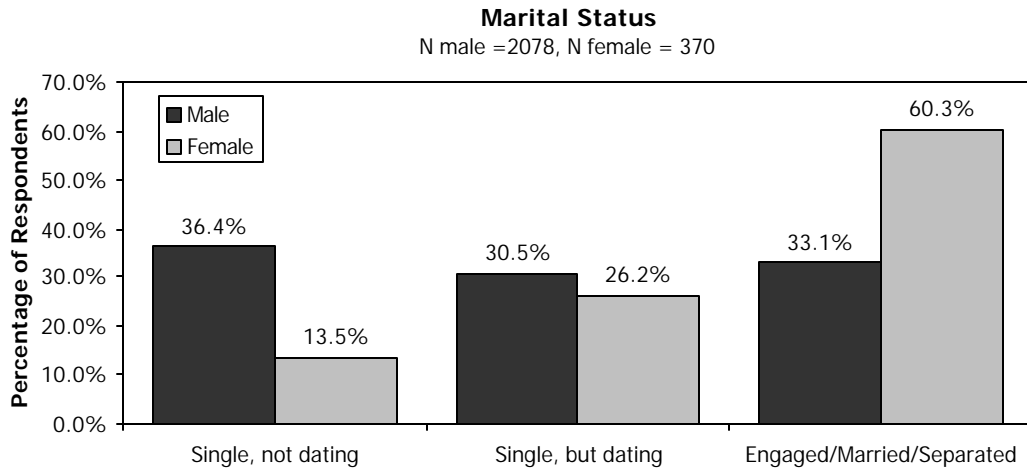
Do you have children?

About one-fifth (19.1%, N=2475) of EQ players have children.

Annual Household Income

About a quarter (27.6%, N=2525) of EQ players have an annual household income below $30,000. About another quarter (24.1%) have an annual household income between $30,000-$49,999. Another quarter (20.4%) of EQ players have an annual household income between $50,000-74,999. And about another quarter (27.8%) have an annual household income above $75,000.

Annual Household Income
N = 2525

11
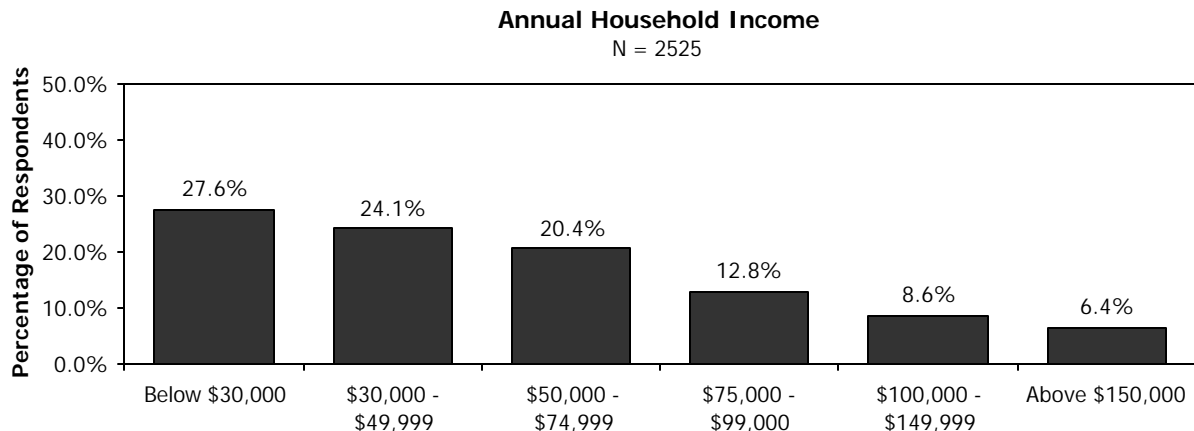
Hours of Play-Time Per Week

EQ players spend on average about 21.9 hours per week playing the game (N=1472).[2]

Average Weekly Play-Time
N = 1499
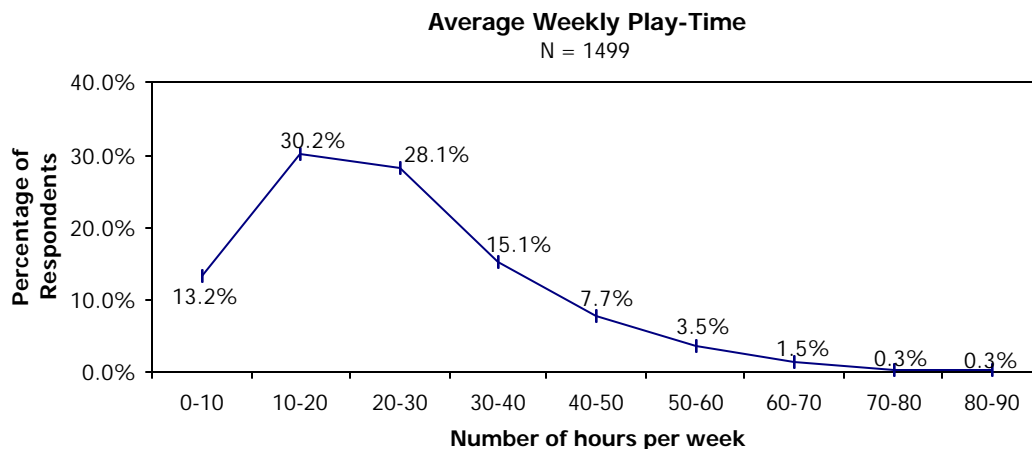
Data from Oswalt's study also shows that EQ players spend significantly more time playing EverQuest ($F[2,222] = 24.02$, $p<.001$) than Quake or Starcraft players spend playing Quake and Starcraft respectively (Tukey HSD, $p< .01$ for both).

Average Playtime Per Week of 3 Computer Games
N starcraft = 84, N quake = 54, N everquest = 91
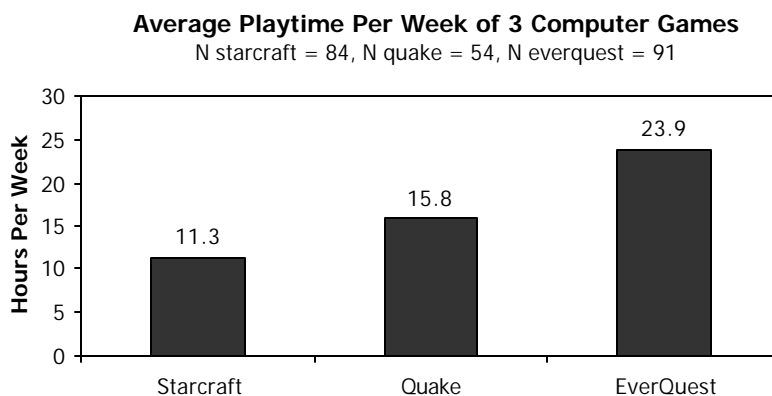
| N | E | O | A | C |

Players who score in the top quartile of Neuroticism play significantly more hours per week than those who score on the bottom quartile ($T[513]=-2.69$, $M_{bottom}(259)=20.1$, $M_{top}(256)=23.4$, $p=.007$). Players who score on the bottom quartile of Openness play significantly more hours per week than those who score on the top quartile ($T[516]=2.36$, $M_{bottom}(264)=23.6$, $M_{top}(324)=20.9$, $p=.01$).

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[2] It was previously reported that female players spend significantly more time playing EQ per week than male players. A larger sample in a more recent phase did not show this effect. The overall average did not change, but the female average did.

Playing EQ with a romantic partner

25% (N=1094) of EQ players play the game with a romantic partner. There is a significant gender difference. 69.5% of female players play the game with a romantic partner, while only 16.4% of male players do (p<.001). A chapter that focuses on playing EQ with a romantic partner can be found starting on page 44.

Playing EQ with a Romantic Partner (by gender)
N male = 921, N female = 164
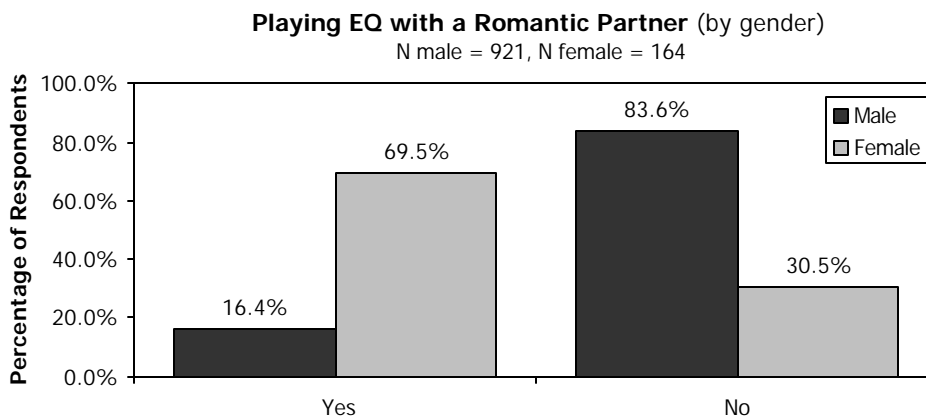
Playing EQ with a family member

About 8.1% (N=898) of EQ players play EQ with a parent or child, and about 15.9% (N=898) play EQ with a sibling. A chapter that focuses on playing EQ with a parent or child can be found starting on page 53.

Experience with traditional table-top Role-Playing Games

About two thirds of EQ players (66.7%, N=896) have previous experience with traditional table-top role-playing games, such as AD&D. Male players are significantly more likely than female players to have had previous experience with traditional RPG's ($\%_{male}(729)=69.8$, $\%_{female}(158)=53.2$, p<.001).

**I used to play or still play table-top role-playing games,
such as AD&D** (by gender)
N male = 729, N female = 158
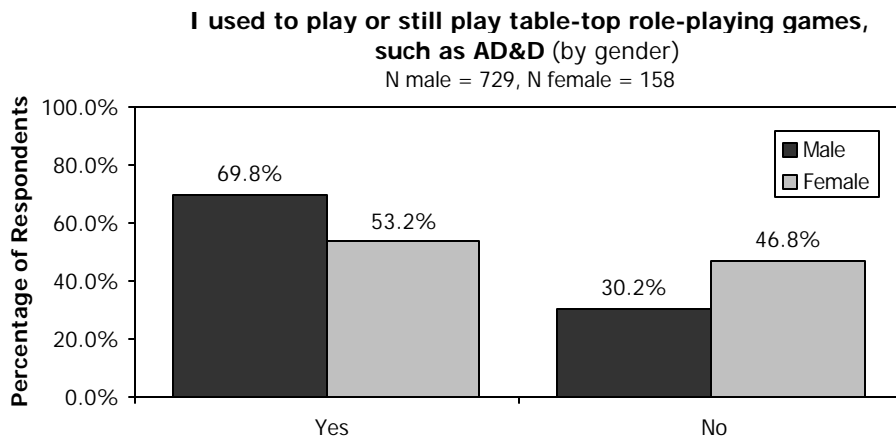
In-Game Demographics

Have you ever tried playing on a PvP server?

About half (48.6%, N=2513) of EQ players have tried playing on a PvP server. Male players are significantly more likely than female players to have tried playing on a PvP server ($\%_{male}(2113)$=51.1, $\%_{female}(374)$=36.1, p<.001). Players who have tried playing on a PvP server are significantly younger than those players who have never tried playing on a PvP server (T[2477]=11.3, $M_{yes}(1267)$=23.2, $M_{no}(1212)$=26.9, p<.001).

I have tried playing on a PvP server
N male = 2113, N female = 374
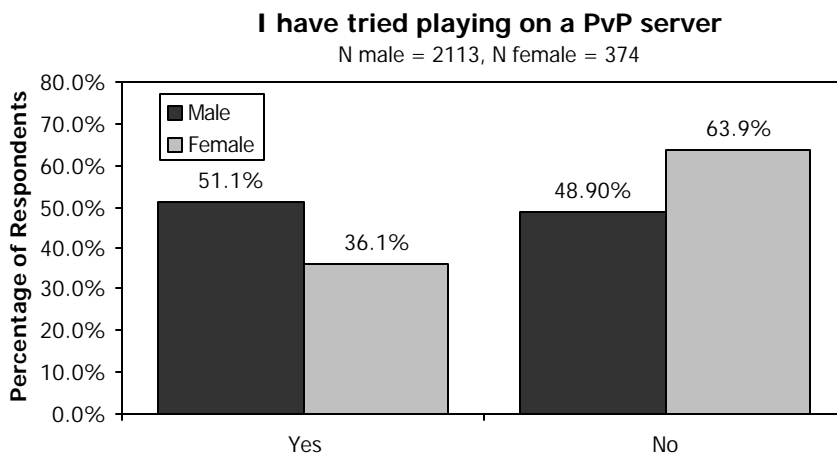
If you have tried playing on PvP, how enjoyable was the experience?

Players who have tried playing on a PvP server were divided as to how enjoyable the experience was. About one-third (32.3%, N=1275) found it somewhat enjoyable, while another third (31.8%) found it somewhat unenjoyable.

If you have played on a PvP server, how enjoyable was the experience?
N = 1275
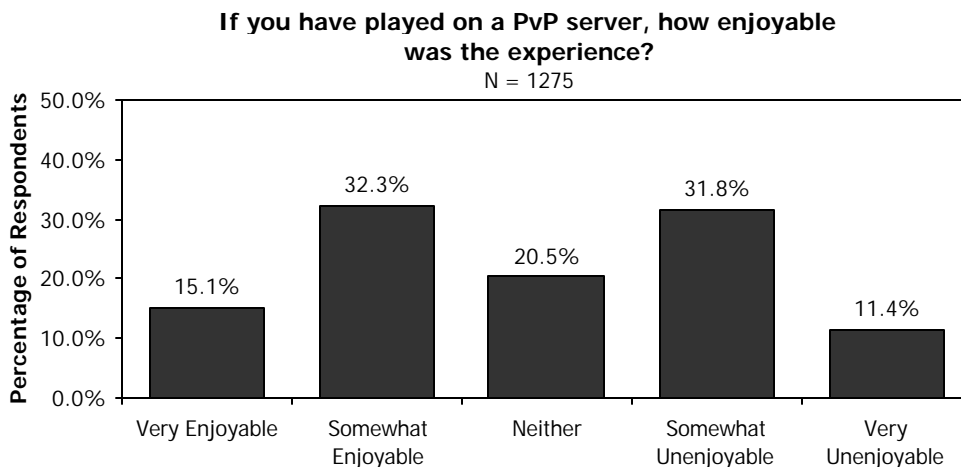
Male players who have tried playing on PvP found it significantly more enjoyable than female players who have tried playing on PvP (T[1259]=2.64, $M_{yes}(1123)$=3.22, $M_{no}(138)$=2.92, p=.008). Players who find the experience very enjoyable are significantly younger than those who find the experience very unenjoyable (T[333]=3.80, $M_{enjoy}(191)$=21.8, $M_{unenjoy}(144)$=24.8, p<.001).

Visual Perspective

The great majority (92.3%, N=2511) of EQ players play the game using the first-person perspective. Players who play EQ using one of the third-person perspectives are significantly younger than those who use the first-person perspective (T[2475]=5.32, M_{third}(180)=22.0, M_{first}(2297)=25.3, p<.001).

Kunark Expansion

About 97.5% (N=2510) of EQ players have the Kunark expansion. Players who have the Kunark expansion are significantly older than players who do not have the Kunark expansion (T[2474]=2.59, M_{yes}(2429)=25.2, M_{no}(47)=22.0, p=.009).

Velious Expansion

About 79.6% (N=2503) of EQ players have the Velious expansion. Players who have the Velious expansion are significantly older than players who do not have the Velious expansion (T[2467]=5.73, M_{yes}(1986)=25.6, M_{no}(483)=23.2, p<.001).

"Shadows of Luclin" Expansion

About half (59.4%, N=2515) of EQ players will definitely buy the "Shadows of Luclin" expansion when it comes out. There are no significant age or gender differences.

Are you going to buy the "Shadows of Luclin" Expansion?
N = 2515
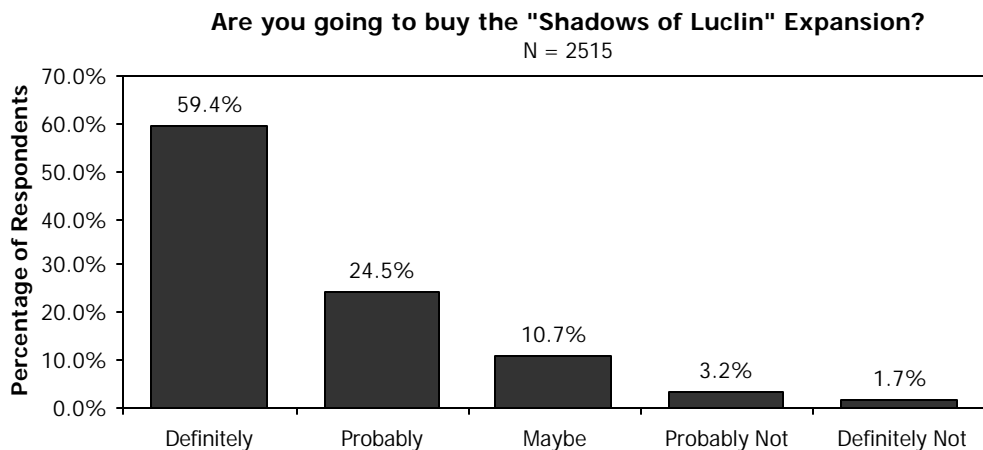
Dragon Raids and Plane Raids

About a quarter (26.1%, N=2471) of EQ players have gone on dragon raids. There are no significant age or gender differences. About a quarter (25.4%, N=2475) of EQ players have gone on plane raids. There are no significant age or gender differences. There is about an 80.6% (N=2464) overlap between players who have gone on a dragon raid and players who have gone on a plane raid.

A character above level 50

About a quarter (23.7%, N=2474) of EQ players have at least one character above level 50. Players who have at least one character above level 50 are significantly older than players who do not have a character above level 50 (T[2438]=-2.93, M$_{yes}$(590)=26.0, M$_{no}$(1850)=24.8, p=.003). There are no significant gender differences.

Leader of a Guild

About 7% (N=2460) of EQ players are leaders of a guild. Female players are significantly more likely to be leaders of guilds than male players (%male(2067)=6.8, %female(368)=10.1, p=.03). There are no significant age differences.

Meta-Game

Why does EQ appeal to you?

Respondents were asked to rate on a scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) a list of statements pertaining to why the game is appealing to them. While EverQuest falls under the RPG genre, EQ players were least likely to agree that the ability to pretend to be someone else is what makes the game appealing to them ($M(1233)=3.30$). The top three reasons chosen for what makes EQ appealing were: 1) I can explore a fantasy world ($M(1235)=4.41$), 2) I get satisfied from achieving goals ($M(1239)=4.22$), and 3) I enjoy the social interactions ($M(1232)=4.20$).

Female players are significantly more likely than male players to enjoy the social interactions within the game ($T[1205]=-4.57$, $M_{male}(1020)=4.16$, $M_{female}(187)=4.43$, $p<.001$), and to find the escapist element appealing ($T[1205]=-2.33$, $M_{male}(1019)=3.78$, $M_{female}(188)=3.96$, $p=.02$). Male players, on the other hand, are significantly more likely to enjoy feeling powerful within the game ($T[1206]=2.19$, $M_{male}(1019)=3.66$, $M_{female}(189)=3.48$, $p=.03$).

Why is EQ Appealing to You?
N male = 1024, N female = 189
pairs marked with "*" are significantly different with each other at p<.05
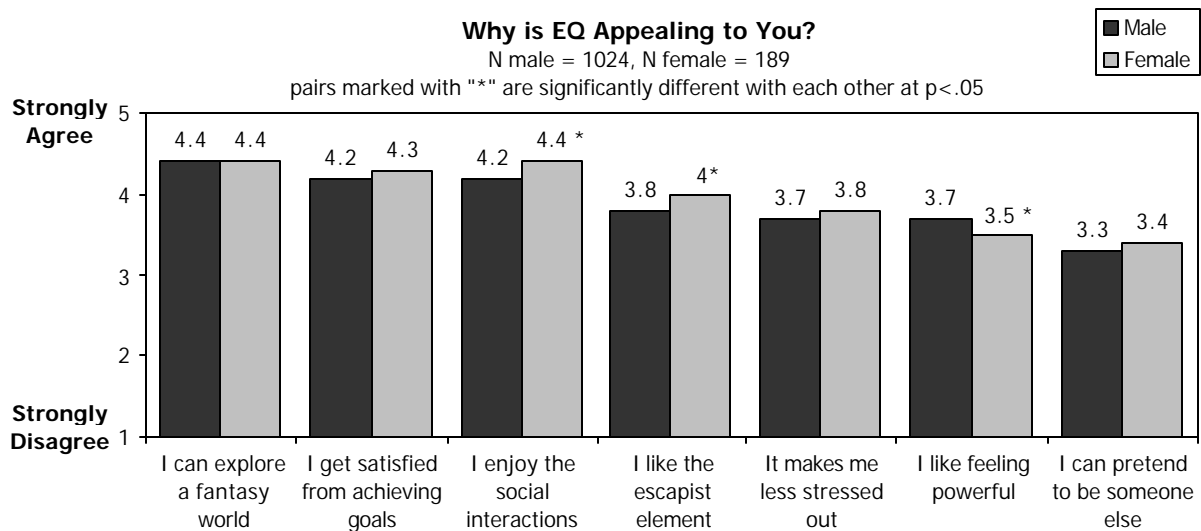
Explore | N | E | **O** | A | C |

Players who score in the top quartile of Openness find the exploration aspect significantly more appealing than players who score in the bottom quartile ($T[590]=-3.91$, $M_{bottom}(266)=4.26$, $M_{top}(326)=4.48$, $p<.001$).

Achieve | N | **E** | O | **A** | **C** |

Players who score on the top quartile of Extraversion find achieving goals significantly more appealing than players who score on the bottom quartile ($T[651]=-3.42$, $M_{bottom}(323)=4.08$, $M_{top}(330)=4.28$, $p<.001$). We see the same kind of significant difference in Agreeableness ($T[613]=-4.32$, $M_{bottom}(334)=4.09$, $M_{top}(281)=4.35$, $p<.001$) and Conscientiousness ($T[531]=-4.1$, $M_{bottom}(252)=4.08$, $M_{top}(283)=4.35$, $p<.001$).

Social | **N** | **E** | O | A | C |

Players who score on the bottom quartile of Neuroticism find social interactions significantly more appealing than players who score on the top quartile ($T[514]=2.91$, $M_{bottom}(258)=4.26$, $M_{top}(258)=4.08$, $p=.003$). Players who score on

the top quartile of Extraversion find social interactions significantly more appealing than players who score on the bottom quartile (T[648]=-5.38, M$_{bottom}$(322)=4.00, M$_{top}$(328)=4.32, p<.001). We see the same kind of significant difference in Openness (T[590]=-4.62, M$_{bottom}$(267)=4.01, M$_{top}$(325)=4.31, p<.001), Agreeableness (T[610]=-7.00, M$_{bottom}$(333)=3.95, M$_{top}$(279)=4.39, p<.001), and Conscientiousness (T[531]=-1.99, M$_{bottom}$(251)=4.10, M$_{top}$(282)=4.24, p<.001).

Escapism | **N** | E | **O** | A | **C** |

Players who score in the bottom quartile of Conscientiousness find the escapism aspect significantly more appealing than the players who score on the top quartile (T[524]=2.55, M$_{bottom}$(251)=3.93, M$_{top}$(278)=3.71, p=.01). Players who score in the top quartile of Openness find the escapism aspect significantly more appealing than the players who score in the bottom quartile (T[590]=-2.23, M$_{bottom}$(266)=3.74, M$_{top}$(326)=3.92, p=.03). We see the same kind of significant difference in Neuroticism (T[514]=-4.74, M$_{bottom}$(257)=3.62, M$_{top}$(259)=4.03, p<.001).

Destress | N | E | O | **A** | C |

Players who score in the top quartile of Agreeableness find that the game is significantly more helpful in relieving stress than those players who score in the bottom quartile (T[613]=-4.61, M$_{bottom}$(334)=3.49, M$_{top}$(381)=3.89, p<.001).

Power | **N** | E | **O** | A | **C** |

Players who score on the top quartile of Neuroticism find the feeling of being powerful significantly more appealing than those in the bottom quartile T[512]=-4.59, M$_{bottom}$(257)=3.34, M$_{top}$(257)=3.76, p<.001). Players who score in the bottom quartile of Openness find the feeling of being powerful significantly more appealing than those in the top quartile (T[590]=2.24, M$_{bottom}$(267)=3.63, M$_{top}$(325)=3.50, p=.03). We see the same kind of significant difference in Conscientiousness (T[530]=3.35, M$_{bottom}$(251)=3.72, M$_{top}$(281)=3.42, p<.001).

Pretend | **N** | **E** | O | A | C |

Players who score on the bottom quartile of Extraversion find the ability to pretend to be someone else significantly more appealing than those in the top quartile (T[650]=22.1, M$_{bottom}$(323)=3.41, M$_{top}$(329)=3.23, p=.02). Players who score on the top quartile of Neuroticism find the ability to pretend to be someone else significantly more appealing those in the bottom quartile (T[514]=-4.72, M$_{bottom}$(255)=3.06, M$_{top}$(258)=3.50, p<.001).

How much satisfaction do you get from … ?

Respondents were given a list of situations in EQ where they might gain satisfaction from, and were asked to rate on a scale from 1 (None at All) to 4 (A Lot) how much satisfaction they got from each. Female players get significantly more satisfaction than male players from killing mobs (T[1496]=-2.17, M_{male}(1256)=2.77, M_{female}(242)=2.89, p=.03), from completing a quest (T[1495]=-3.80, M_{male}(1255)=3.43, M_{female}(242)=3.61, p<.001), from crafting a complex trade skill item (T[1487]=-3.90, M_{male}(1248)=3.1, M_{female}(241)=3.35, p<.001), and from making friends in EQ (T[1492]=-5.60, M_{male}(1253)=3.3, M_{female}(241)=3.59, p<.001).

How Much Satisfaction Do You Get From … ?
N male =1255, N female = 242
pairs marked with "^" are significantly different at p<.05
pairs marked with "*" are significantly different at p<.001
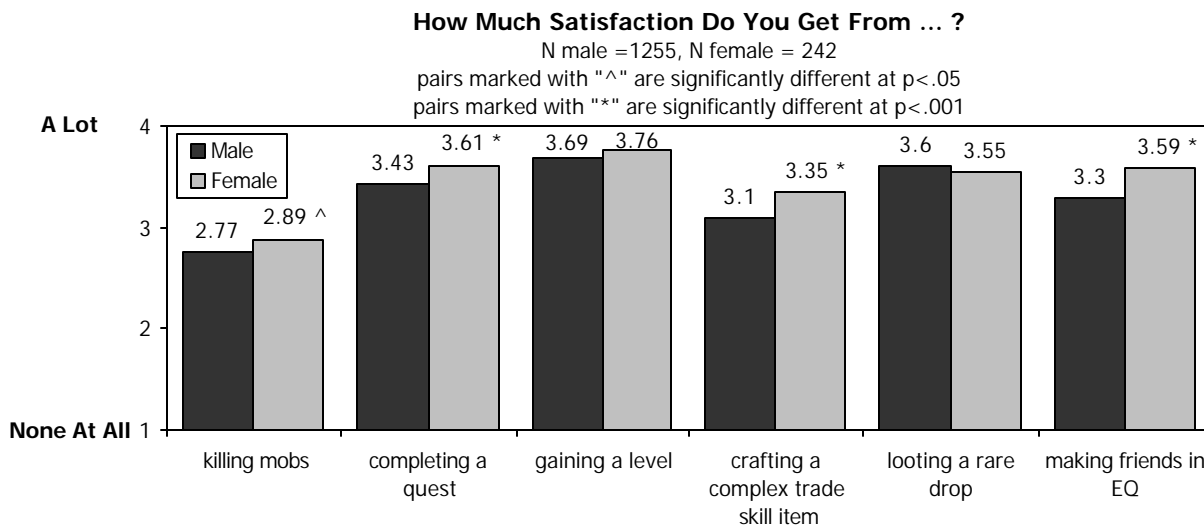
How much does it bother you when … ?

Respondents were given a list of situations in EQ which might bother them, and were asked to rate on a scale from 1 (Not at All) to 4 (A Lot) how much each bothered them. Male players are significantly more likely than female players to be bothered when they die (T[1494]=2.88, M_{male}(1255)=2.96, M_{female}(241)=2.78, p=.004). Female players are significantly more likely than male players to be bothered when newbies beg for money or items (T[1495]=-5.65, M_{male}(1256)=2.87, M_{female}(242)=3.29, p<.001).

How Much Does It Bother You When … ?
N male =1255, N female = 242
pairs marked with "^" are significantly different at p<.05
pairs marked with "*" are significantly different at p<.001
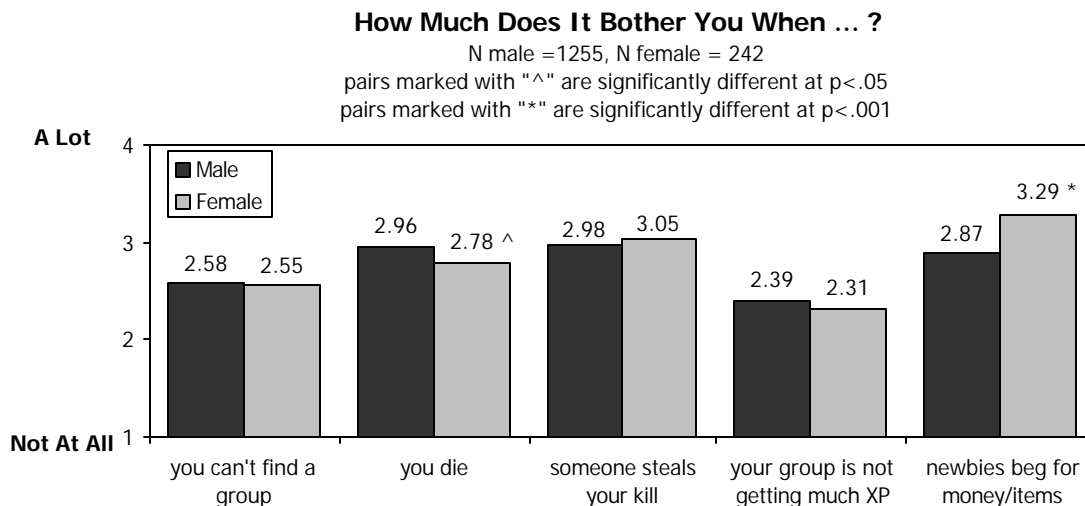
How appealing/unappealing would these changes be?

Respondents were given a list of hypothetical changes to EQ, and were asked to rate from 1 (very unappealing) to 5 (very appealing) as to how appealing the changes would be. Male players are significantly more likely than female players to find it appealing to be able to upload a photo of your face to be the face of their character (T[1494]=2.50, $M_{male}(1254)=2.79$, $M_{female}(242)=2.57$, p=.01), to have more weapon types (T[1493]=4.52, $M_{male}(1253)=4.16$, $M_{female}(242)=3.9$, p<.001), and to have more spell types (T[1496]=2.13, $M_{male}(1256)=4.31$, $M_{female}(242)=4.19$, p<.001). Female players are significantly more likely than male players to find it appealing to be able to have enhanced emotes, expressions and gestures (T[1495]=4.28, $M_{male}(1255)=4.17$, $M_{female}(242)=4.4$, p<.001).

How Appealing/Unappealing Would These Changes Be?
N male =1255, N female = 242
pairs marked with "^" are significantly different at p<.05
pairs marked with "*" are significantly different at p<.001
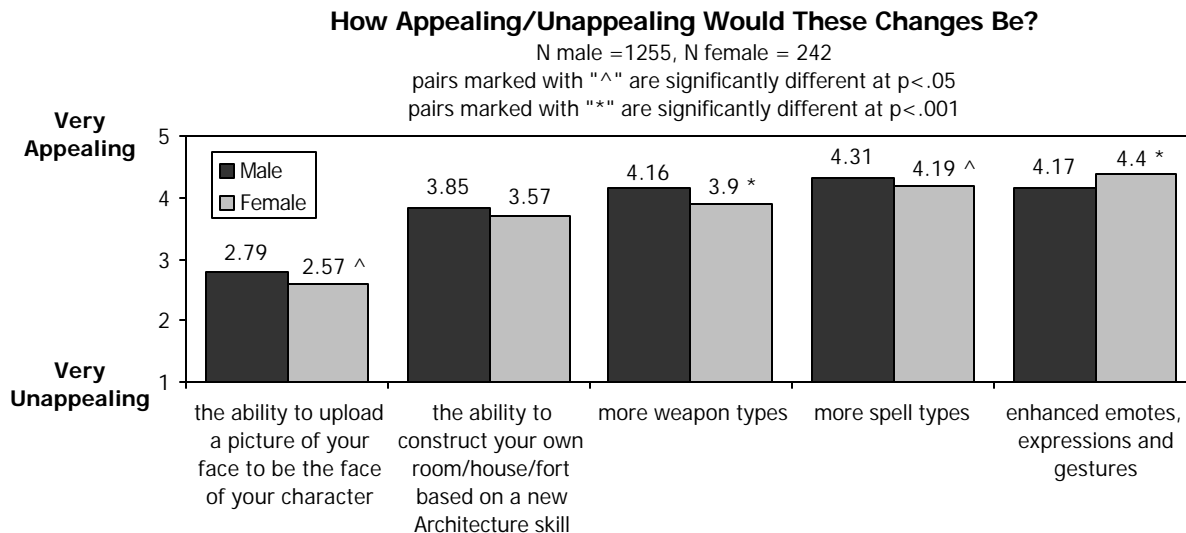
Is EQ the best computer game you have ever played?

The majority (72.0%, N=1708) of EQ players feel that EQ is the best computer game they have ever played. Female players are significantly more likely than male players to feel that EQ is the best computer game they have ever played (%$_{male}(1410)=70.3$, %$_{female}(269)=82.3$, p<.001).

EQ is the best computer game I have ever played
N male = 1410, N female = 269
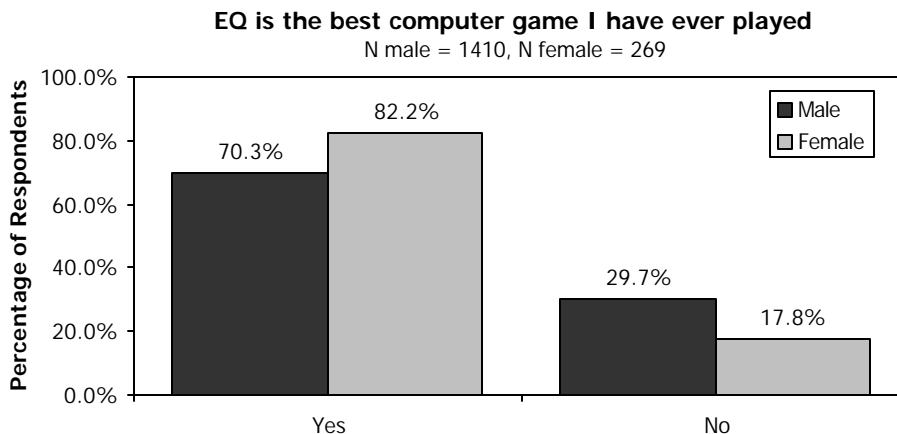
Do people learn anything from EQ?

About 80% of EQ players feel that people do learn something from the game. Female players are significantly more likely than male players to feel that many valuable things can be learned from the game ($\%_{male}(1023)=27.5$, $\%_{female}(189)=36$, p<.01).

Do people learn anything from EQ? (by gender)
N male = 1023, N female = 189
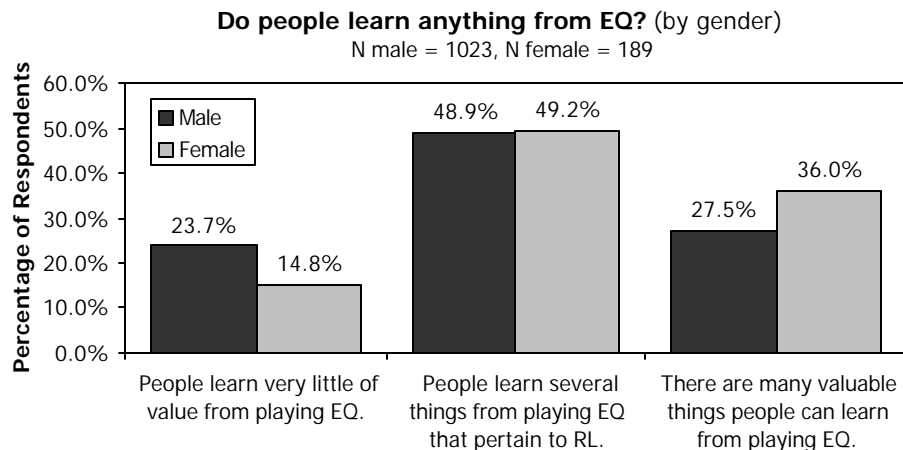
N E O A C

Players who feel that they learn many things from EQ score significantly higher on Agreeableness ($T[566]=3.78$, $M_{many}(305)=19.0$, $M_{little}(263)=18.1$, p<.001), Conscientiousness ($T[566]=3.15$, $M_{many}(305)=15.6$, $M_{little}(263)=14.8$, p=.001) and Extraversion ($T[566]=2.70$, $M_{many}(305)=15.4$, $M_{little}(263)=14.5$, p=.007) than those players who feel that they learn very little of value from playing EQ.

The Play-Nice Rules

The majority (67.7%, N=1702) of players feel that the Play-Nice Rules either made no difference or actually made things worse. Players who feel that the Play-Nice Rules made things worse are significantly younger ($F[2,1665]=18.5$, p<.001) than those who feel that the rules made no difference (Tukey HSD, $M_{worse}(214)=22.5$, $M_{nochange}(950)=25.7$, p<.001) or made things better (Tukey HSD, $M_{worse}(214)=22.5$, $M_{better}(538)=26.4$, p<.001).

The Play-Nice Rules:
N=1702
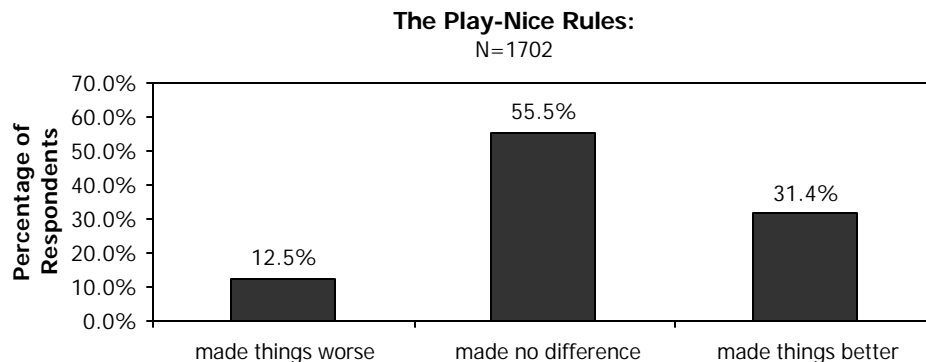
Would you hack the game if you could?

About one-fifth (20%, N=1707) of EQ players would hack the game if they could. Male players are significantly more likely than female players to hack the game if they could ($\%_{male}(1409)=22.5\%$, $\%_{female}(269)=9.7\%$, p<.001). Players

who would hack the game if they could are significantly younger than those who would not (T[1671]=3.74, $M_{yes}(341)=24.1$, $M_{no}(1332)=25.9$, p<.001).

Would you hack the game if you could?
N male =1409, N female = 269
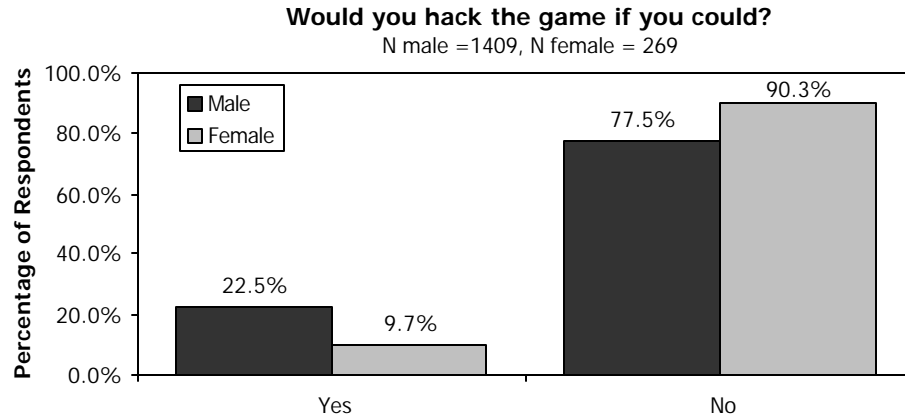
Trust: Environment and Gender

In a Flash-implemented experimental design that manipulated the variables: environment (normal chat-room/EQ) and gender (male/female), EQ players were randomly assigned to one of the 4 possible scenarios (2 presented here):

1) *"You've been adventuring with a male character, and during a medding break the player says that he's 22 and lives in France. Do you believe him?*

2) *"You are in a normal chatroom, and during a private message dialogue with someone she says that she's 22 and lives in France. Do you believe her?"*

Participants were then asked to rate on a 5 point scale, ranging from "Absolutely Not" (1) to "Absolutely" (5), whether they would believe the individual. There was a significant effect between environments (F[1,661]=10.64, p=.001), and it was found that EQ players were more likely to believe the individual in the EQ condition rather than the chat-room condition (Tukey HSD, $M_{eq}(312)=3.53$, $M_{chatroom}(357)=3.22$, p<.001). The gender of the presented individual also produced a significant effect (F[1,661]=8.63, p=.003), and it was found that EQ players are more trusting of male-presenting personas than female-presenting personas (Tukey HSD, $M_{male}(326)=3.52$, $M_{female}(343)=3.24$, p<.001). The gender of the participant did not produce a significant effect.

Trust: Environment and Gender
N = 669
Means with different alphabets are significantly different from each other at p < .05
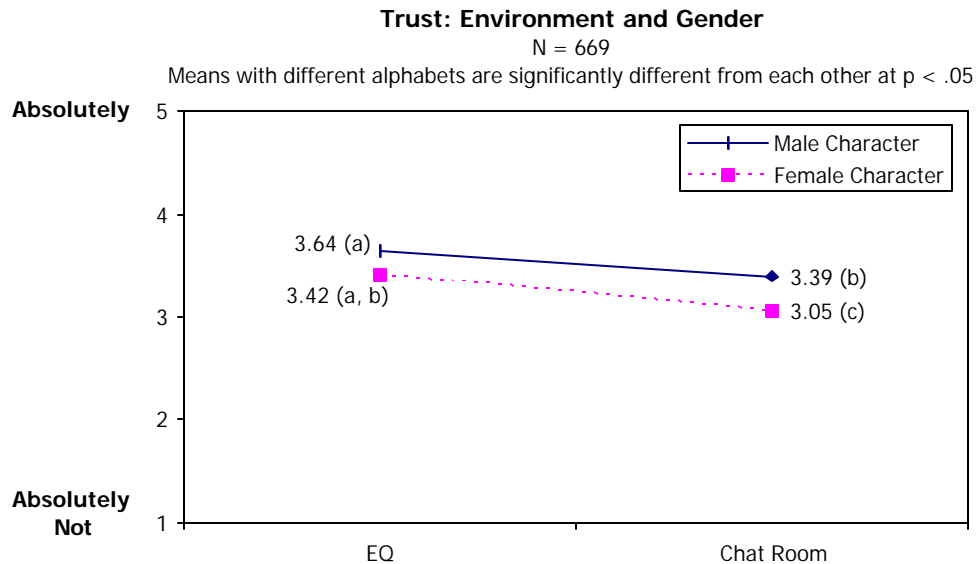
Meta-Character

What matters in character creation?

Almost half of EQ players (42.3%, N=896) feel that game impact (i.e. the ability to solo, demand in groups) is what matters most during character creation. About 10% of players feel that thinking up the right name is what matters most. There are no significant gender differences.

When I create a character, what matters most to me is:
N=896
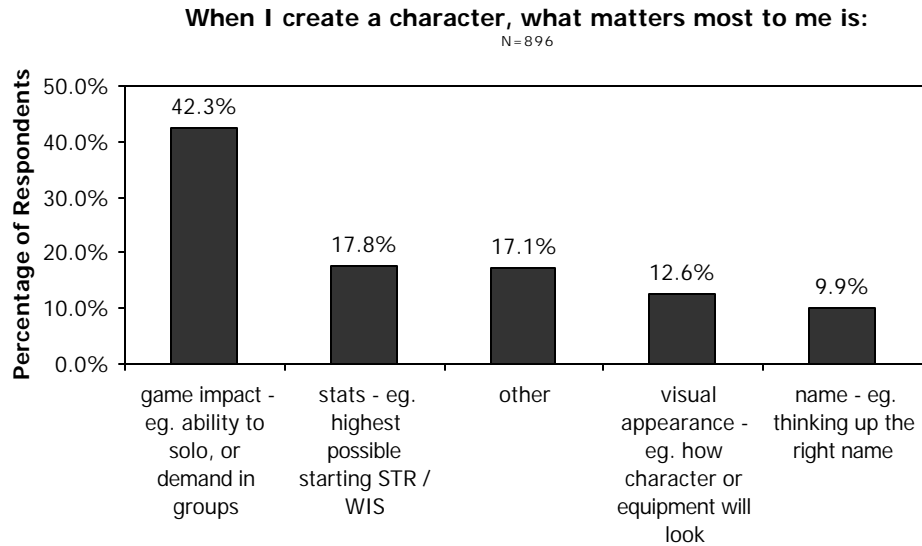
Level of most often played character

On average, EQ gamers are usually using a character around level 33 (level= 33.5, N=1710).[3]

Level of most often played character
N = 1710
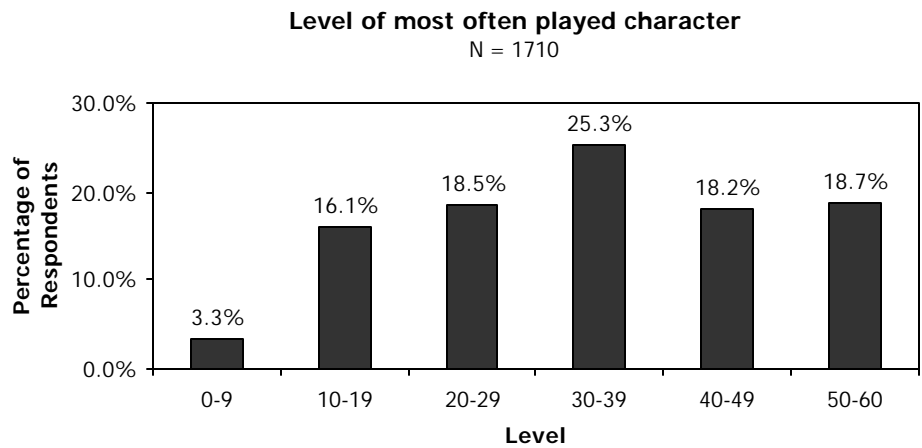
| N | E | O | **A** | C |

Players in the bottom quartile of Agreeableness often use significantly higher level characters than those players in the top quartile T[291]=2.29, M$_{bottom}$(137)=35.7, M$_{top}$(156)=32.0, p=.02).

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[3] It was previously reported that female players are usually using a significantly higher level character than male players. A larger sample from a more recent phase did not show a significant effect, but only a trend in the same direction of p=.1

Would you sell your character?

If offered an amount equal to $(level*level)/10 (ie. A level 30 character would be $(30*30)/10=$90), 5.64% (N=1095) of EQ players would sell their main character. If offered double that amount (i.e. A level 30 character would be worth $(30*30)/5=$180), 16.4% of players would sell their characters. Female players are significantly less willing than male players to sell their characters in both scenarios (%$_{male}$(921)=6.3%, %$_{female}$(165)=1.8%, p=.02; %$_{male}$(921)=17.4%, %$_{female}$(165)=9.8%, p=.02).

I would sell my character at this price (by gender)
N male = 921, N female = 165
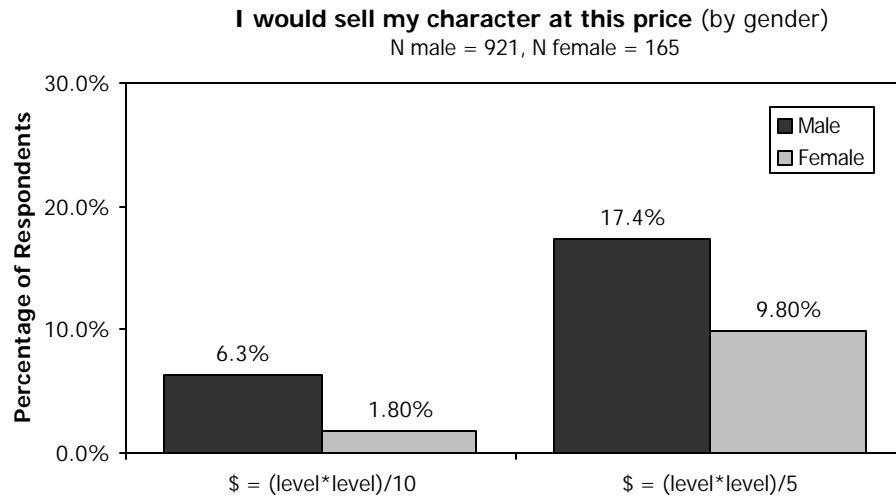
While there is no significant age difference in the first condition, players who are willing to sell their main character in the second condition are significantly younger than those who are not willing to (T[1069]=-5.30, M$_{yes}$(174)=22.7, M$_{no}$(897)=26.3, p<.001).

Favorite Race/Class

The most popular races are the Wood Elves (16.3%, N=1704), followed by the Humans (12.1%) and then the Dark Elves (11.2%). The least popular races are the Ogres (2.0%), followed by the Trolls (2.2%), and then the Gnomes (5.1%). Players who choose Wood Elves or Barbarians as their favorite race are significantly older than EQ players in general (M$_{all}$(1678)=25.5; M$_{woodelf}$(272)=26.7, p=.02; M$_{barbarian}$(124)=27.2, p=.03). Players who choose Dark Elves or Iksars as their favorite race are significantly younger than EQ players in general (M$_{all}$(1678)=25.5; M$_{darkelf}$(183)=23.6, p<.001; M$_{iksar}$(87)=22.5, p<.001).

Favorite Race
N = 1704
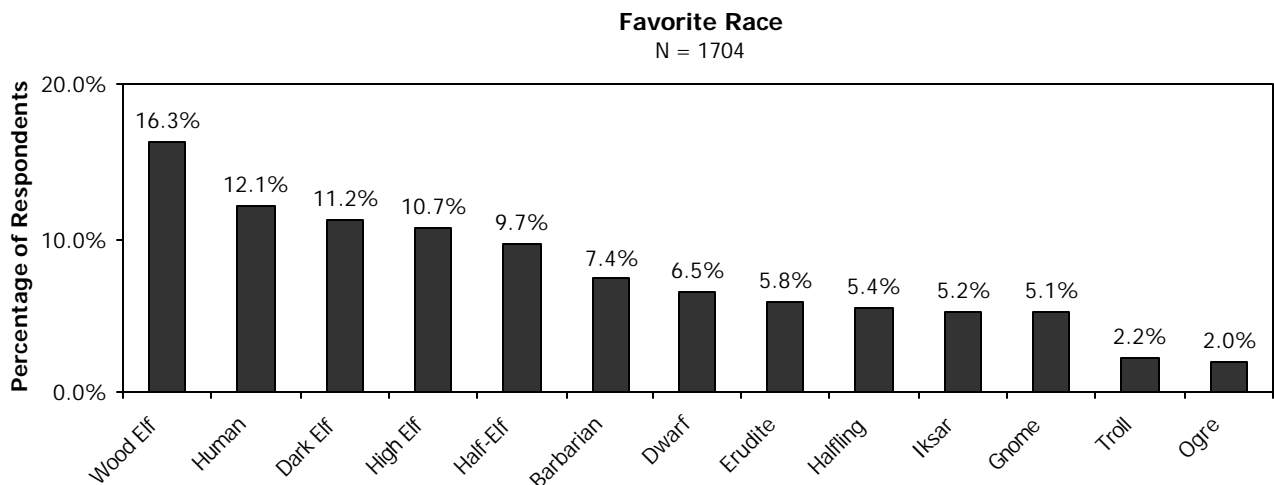
The most popular classes are Druids (13.1%), followed by Warriors (9.1%) and then Enchanters (9.0%). The least popular classes are Shadow Knights (3.9%), followed by Wizards (4.5%), and then Bards (5.0%). Players who choose Druids as their favorite class are significantly older than EQ players in general ($M_{all}(1678)=25.5$, $M_{druids}(219)=28.0$, $p<.001$). Players who choose Rogues or Monks as their favorite class are significantly younger than EQ players in general ($M_{all}(1678)=25.5$, $M_{rogue}(88) = 23.2$, $p=.01$, $M_{monk}(104)=22.9$, $p=.001$).

Favorite Class

N = 1702
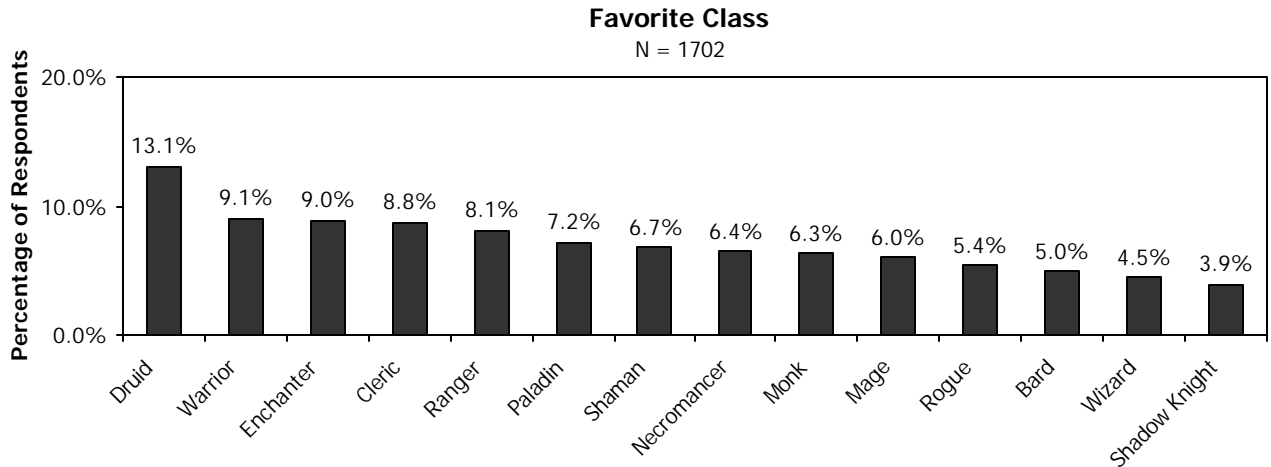
If Norrath were real ...

If Norrath were real and EQ players had to live in Norrath in the form of a EQ character, about 75.5% (N=899) of EQ players would want to be male, while 24.2% would want to be female. 8.9% of male players would want to be female, while 3.2% of female players would want to be male.

The most popular races are the Wood Elves (22.9%), followed by High Elves (15.1%), and then Humans (11.7%). The least popular races are the Ogres (0.7%), followed by the Trolls (1.4%), and then Iksars (2.6%). Female players are significantly more likely than male players to want to be Wood Elves ($\%_{male}(732)=19.3$, $\%_{female}(158)=39.2\%$, $p<.001$), whereas male players are significantly more likely to want to be Human ($\%_{male}(732)=13.1$, $\%_{female}(158)=4.4\%$, $p=.002$).

Choice of Race

N=899
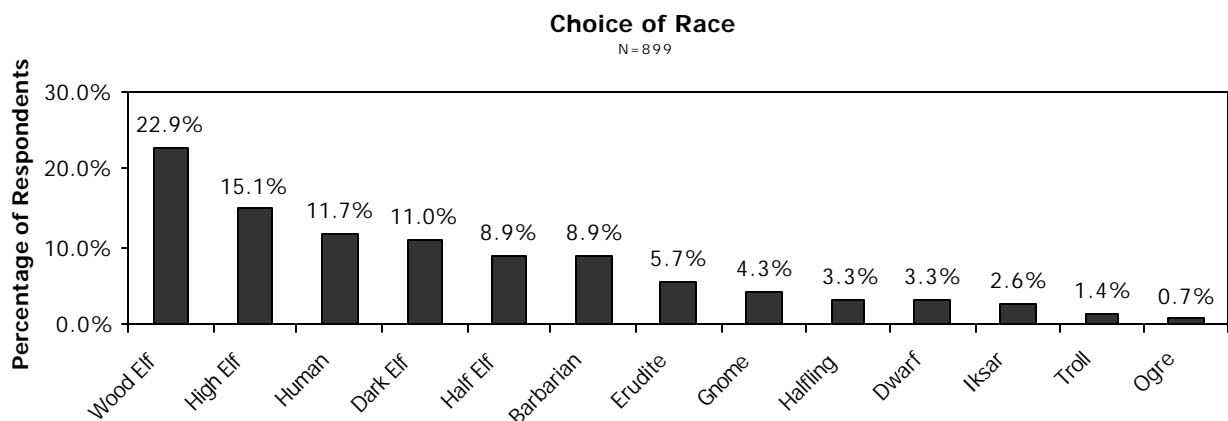
The most popular class is the Druid (15.5%), followed by the Enchanter (10.2%), and then the Cleric (8.9%). The least popular class is the Shadow Knight (2.2%), followed by the Monk (3.9%), and then the Rogue (4.3%). Female players are significantly more likely than male players to want to be druids ($\%_{male}(732)=13.4$, $\%_{female}(158)=24.7$, $p<.001$), and clerics ($\%_{male}(732)=7.5$, $\%_{female}(158)=14.6$, $p=.005$). Male players are significantly more likely to want to be warriors ($\%_{male}(732)=8.6$, $\%_{female}(158)=3.2$, $p=.02$).

Choice of Class

N=899

Class	Percentage
Druid	15.5%
Enchanter	10.2%
Cleric	8.9%
Ranger	8.2%
Bard	7.7%
Warrior	7.7%
Shaman	7.5%
Wizard	7.1%
Paladin	6.9%
Mage	5.3%
Necromancer	4.4%
Rogue	4.3%
Monk	3.9%
Shadow Knight	2.2%

Choice of Class (by gender)

N male = 732, N female = 188

Class	Male	Female
Druid	13.4%	24.7%
Enchanter	10.4%	10.1%
Warrior	8.6%	3.2%
Ranger	8.2%	8.2%
Wizard	7.8%	4.4%
Paladin	7.7%	3.8%
Bard	7.5%	8.2%
Cleric	7.5%	14.6%
Shaman	7.4%	8.2%
Mage	5.3%	5.1%
Necromancer	4.9%	2.5%
Monk	4.4%	1.9%
Rogue	4.2%	4.4%
Shadow Knight	2.6%	0.6%
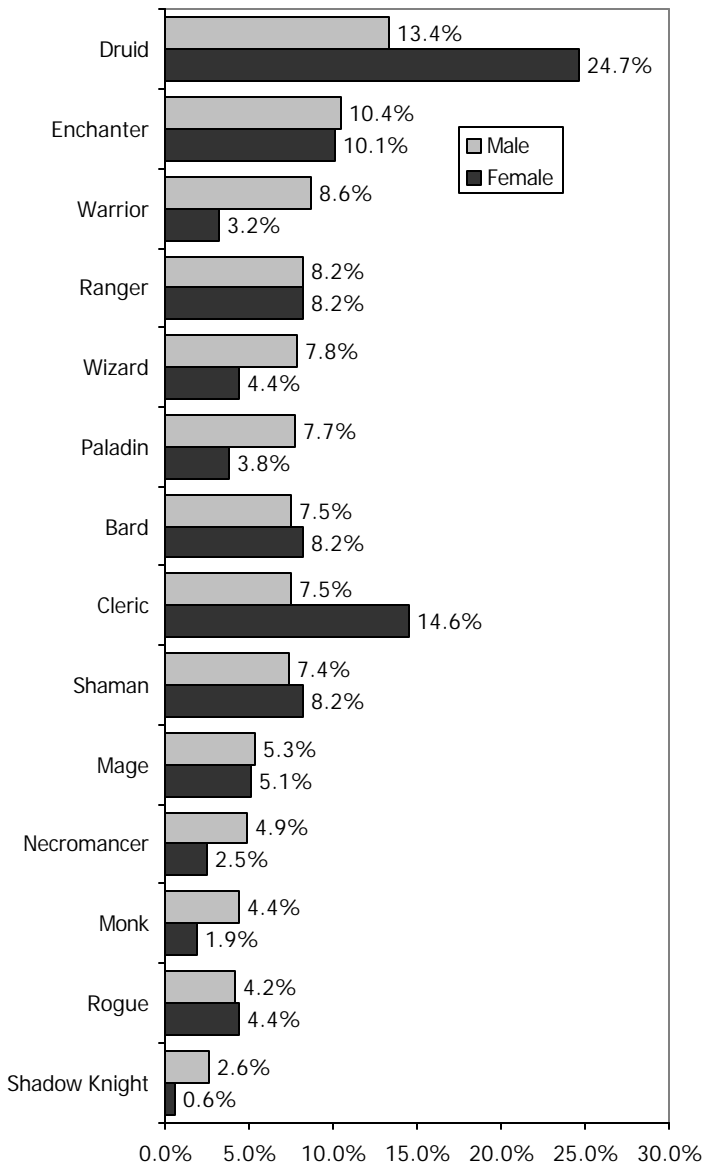
Choice of Race (by gender)

N male = 732, N female = 158

Race	Male	Female
Wood Elf	19.3%	39.2%
High Elf	15.0%	16.5%
Human	13.1%	4.4%
Dark Elf	10.7%	12.7%
Half Elf	9.2%	7.6%
Barbarian	9.0%	8.9%
Erudite	5.6%	5.7%
Gnome	4.6%	3.2%
Dwarf	4.0%	0.0%
Halfling	3.8%	1.3%
Iksar	3.0%	0.6%
Troll	1.8%	0.0%
Ogre	0.8%	0.0%
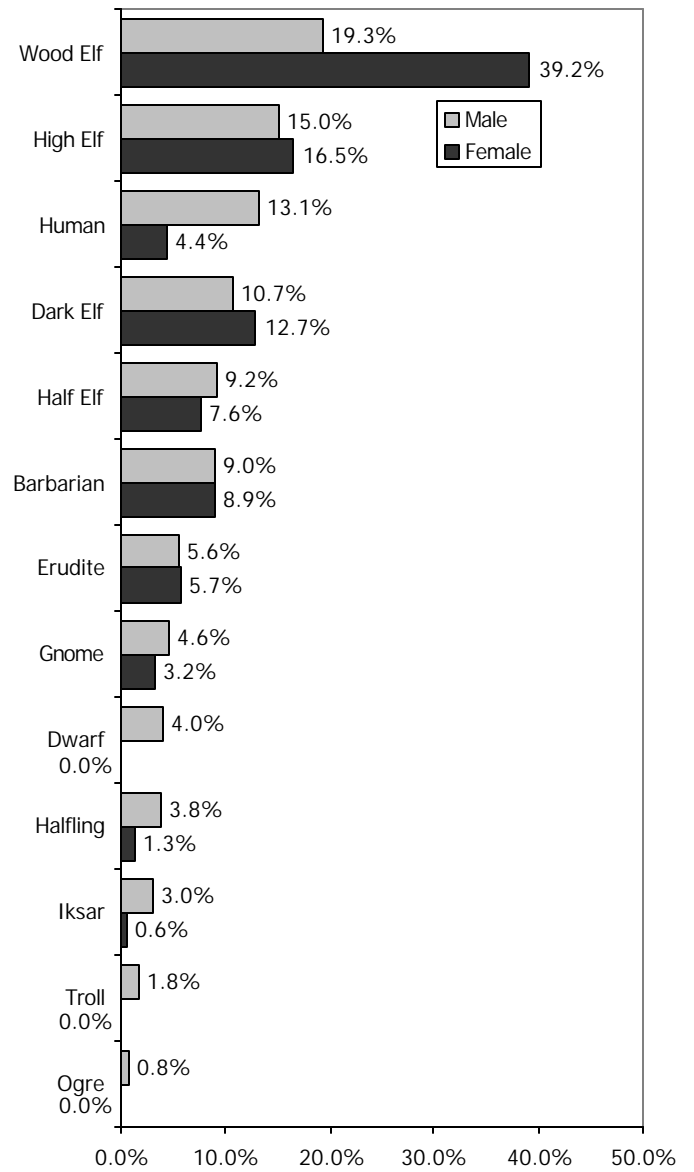
Relationships

Do you want to know your EQ friends in real life?

Almost half (46.1%, N=1237) of EQ players would not mind meeting their EQ friends in real life, while only 12% of players would prefer to know their EQ friends only in EQ. There are no significant age or gender differences.

Desire To Know EQ Friends in Real Life (by gender)
N = 1237
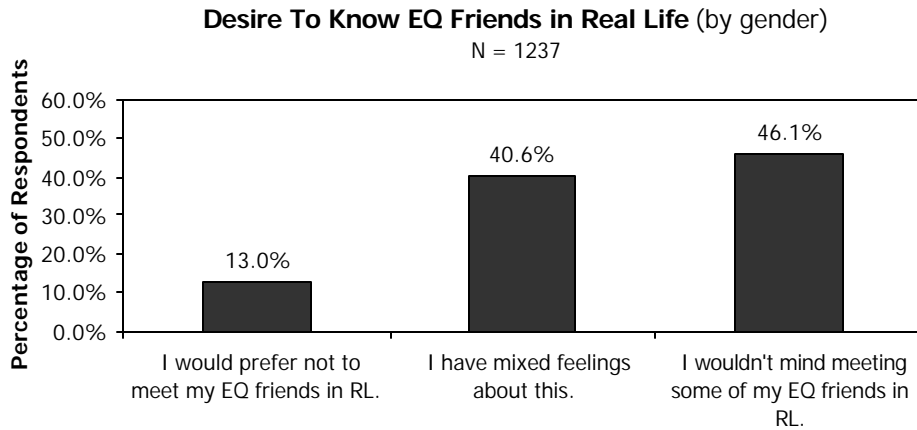
Quality of EQ Friendships

About half (46.9%, N=1235) of EQ players feel that some of their EQ friendships are comparable to their real-life friendships. 15% of players feel that some of their EQ friendships are better than their real-life relationships, while 37.7% feel that their EQ friendships do not come close to their real-life relationships. Female players are significantly more likely to feel that some of their EQ friendships are better than their real-life relationships ($\%_{male}(1021)=13.4\%$, $\%_{female}(188)=23.4\%$, p<.001).

Quality of EQ Relationships (by gender)
N male = 1021, N female = 188
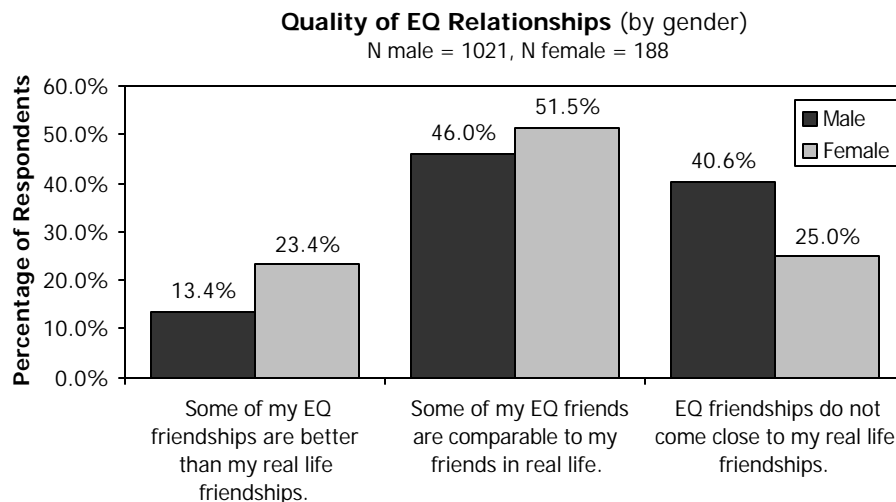
EQ players who feel that some of their EQ friendships are better than their real-life friendships are significantly younger (F[2,1201]=9.94, p<.001) than players who feel that some of their EQ friendships are comparable to their real-life friendships (Tukey HSD, $M_{better}=23.2$, $M_{comparable}=26.1$, p<.001), and those who feel that their EQ friendships do not come close to their real-life friendships (Tukey HSD, $M_{better}=23.2$, $M_{notclose}=26.0$, p<.001).

N	E	O	A	C

Players who feel that some of their EQ friendships are better than their real-life friendships score significantly lower on Extraversion (T[614]=3.07, M_{better}(171)=14.2, $M_{notclose}$(445)=15.3, p=.002), and significantly higher on Neuroticism (T[614]=-5.24, M_{better}(171)=15.0, $M_{notclose}$(445)=13.2, p<.001) than those players who feel that their EQ friendships do not compare with their real-life friendships.

Falling in Love

About two-thirds (66.4%, N=1038) of EQ players have never role-played falling in love or fell in love with another EQ player or character. 22.8% have role-played falling in love with another EQ character. 9.2% have had a crush or fallen in love with another EQ player, while 13.8% have had a crush or fallen in love with another EQ character. Female players are almost twice as likely than male players to have role-played falling in love or actually fallen in love with another character or player, all significant at the p<.001 level.

Falling in Love (by gender)
N male = 861, N female = 155
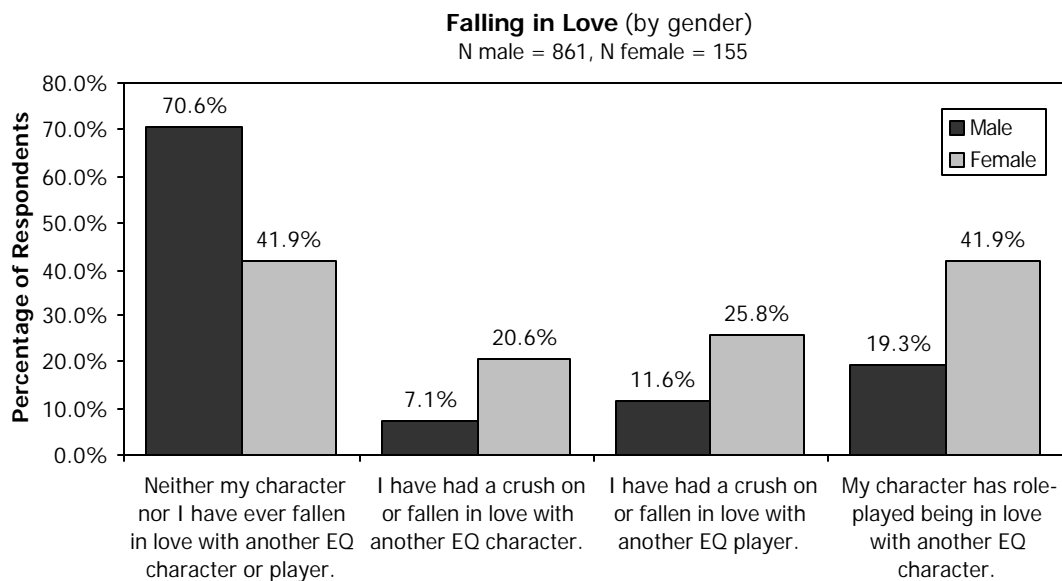
Of those players who have role-played falling in love in EQ, the male players are significantly more likely than the female players to have done so only through characters of the opposite gender ($\%_{male}$(273)=15.3, $\%_{female}$(95)=6.3, p=.03), while the female players are significantly more likely than the male players to have only done so through characters of the their own gender ($\%_{male}$(273)=65.6, $\%_{female}$(95)=84.2, p<.001).

On Role-Playing Romantic Relationships (by gender)
N male = 273, N female = 95
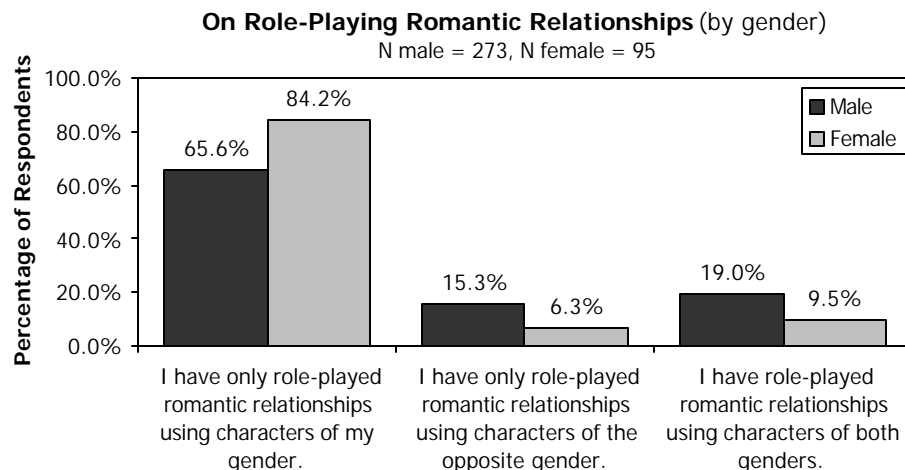
Are you going out / engaged to / married to someone you met in EQ?

14.5% (N=269) of female players and 3.3% (N=1406) of male players are in real-life romantic relationships that started in EQ.

Have your real-life relationships suffered because of playing EQ?

About a third of EQ players (32%, N=1099) feel that their real-life relationships have suffered because of playing EQ. There are no significant age or gender differences. However, almost half of EQ players (44%) feel that their real-life relationships have not suffered because of playing EQ.

My real life relationships have suffered because of playing EQ.
N=1099
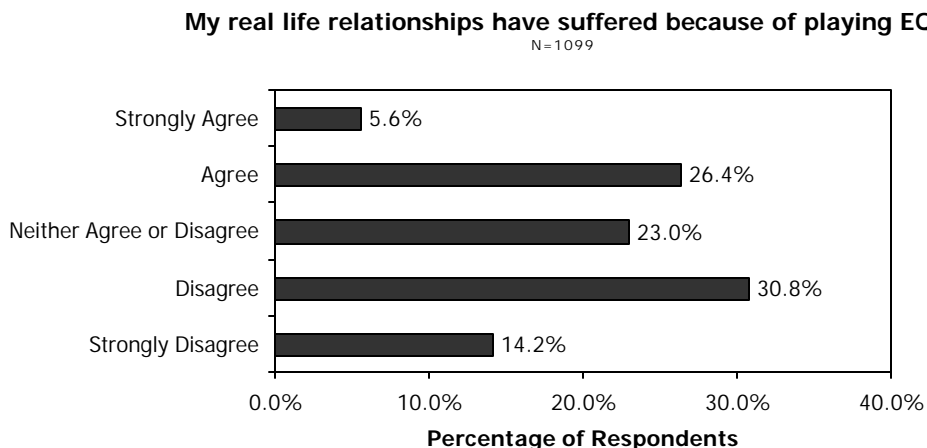
Would it bother you if your romantic partner role-played being in love with someone else?

About a third of EQ players (36.6%, N=826) who are currently in a romantic relationship in real life would be bothered if their romantic partner role-played being in love with someone else in EQ.

It would bother me if my romantic partner role-played being in love with another character in EQ
N=826
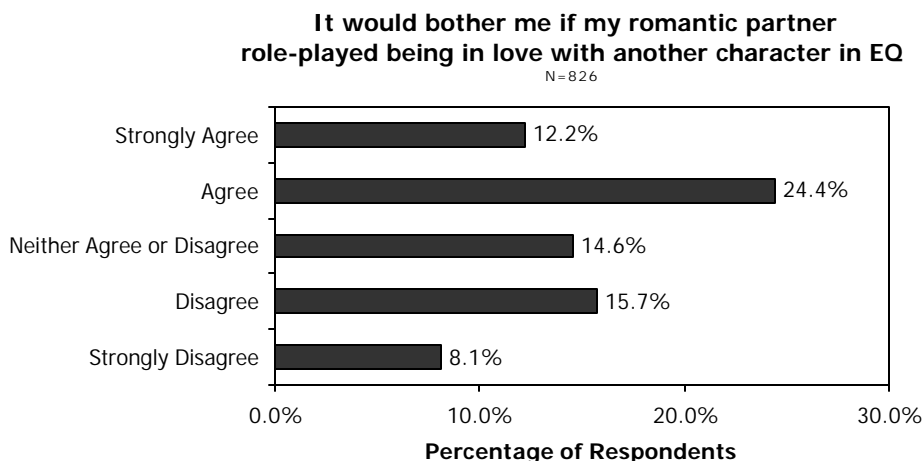
Female players are significantly more likely than male players to be bothered if their romantic partner role-played being in love with someone else in EQ (T[819]=-2.97, M_{male}(672)=3.17, M_{female}(149)=3.50, p=.003).

Would you feel guilty if you role-played being in love with someone else?

About a third of EQ players (31.9%, N=816) who are currently involved in a real life romantic relationship would feel guilty if they role-played a romantic relationship with someone else in EQ. There are no age or gender differences.

**I am curently involved in a real-life romantic relationship, and
I would feel guilty or even immoral if I role-played being in love with
another EQ character**

N=816

Strongly Agree	10.2%
Agree	21.7%
Neither Agree or Disagree	13.7%
Disagree	18.8%
Strongly Disagree	9.8%

Percentage of Respondents
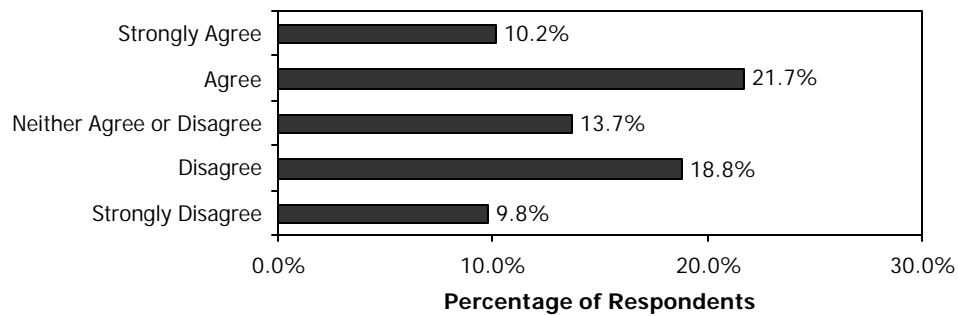
Is it silly to role-play romantic relationships in EQ?

Most EQ players (32.2%, N=1097) do not have a strong opinion as to whether role-played romantic relationships are silly.

Role-playing romantic relationships in EQ is silly

N=1097

Strongly Agree	8.6%
Agree	20.3%
Neither Agree or Disagree	32.2%
Disagree	29.7%
Strongly Disagree	9.0%

Percentage of Respondents
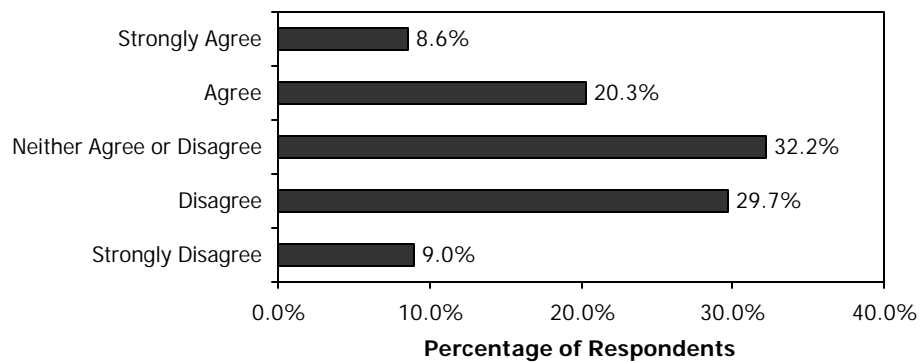
Male players are significantly more likely than female players to feel that role-played romantic relationships are silly (T[1086]=5.05, M_{male}(923)=2.97, M_{female}(165)=2.51, p<.001).

In-game Dynamics

Do you usually invite others, or are you usually invited into a group?

About half (56%, N=1232) of EQ players claim that they invite others and are invited into groups just as often. About one-third (34%, N=1232) of players feel that they seldom initiate groups and are usually invited into groups. There is no significant gender difference in initiating or joining groups.

**Do you usually invite others, or
are you usually invited into a group?**
N=1232
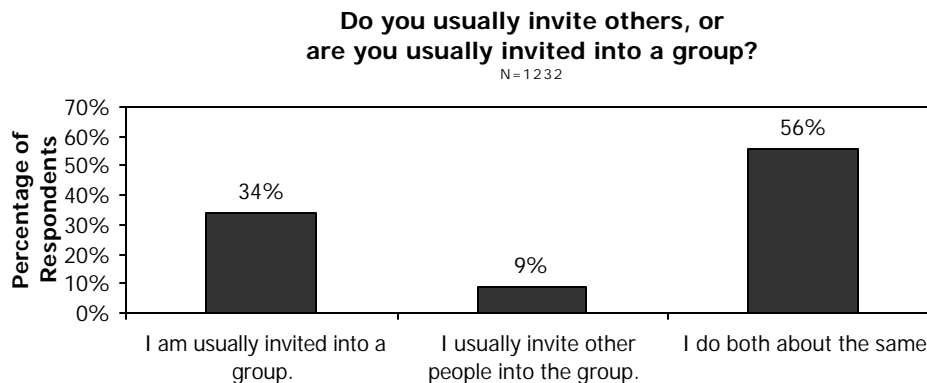
EQ players who usually invite others into groups are significantly younger (F[2,1198]=8.99, p<.001) than EQ players who are usually invited into groups (Tukey HSD, M_{invite}=23.3, $M_{invited}$=26.7, p<.001), and those who do both about the same (Tukey HSD, M_{invite}=23.3, M_{both}=25.3, p=.04).

N	**E**	O	A	C

Players who usually invite others into groups score significantly higher on Extraversion than those players who are usually invited into groups (T[516]=-4.53, $M_{invited}$(409)=13.9, M_{invite}(109)=15.9, p<.001).

How often are you the leader of the group?

About two-thirds (63%, N=1236) of EQ players are sometimes leaders of groups. 16.5% of players claim that they are usually the leaders of groups, while 20.2% feel that they almost never are leaders. Male and female players do not differ significantly in how often they lead a group.

How often are you the leader of the group?
N=1236
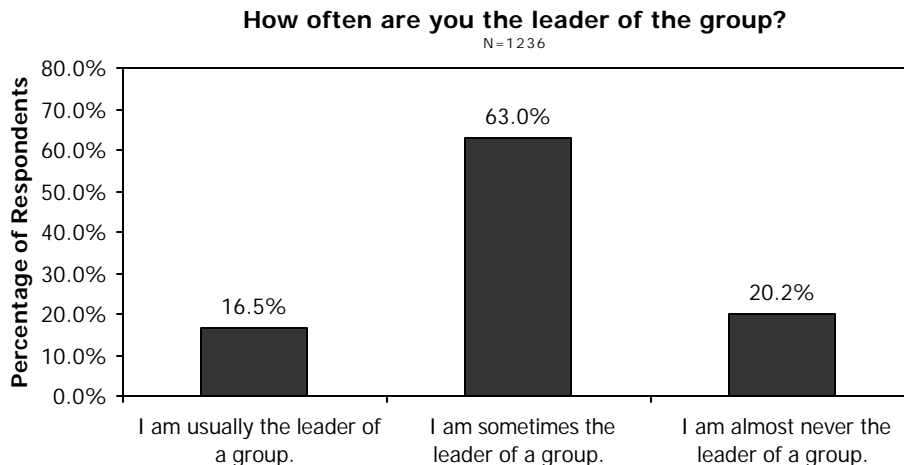
EQ players who are usually leaders are significantly younger (F[2,1202]=13.7, p<.001) than players who are sometimes leaders (Tukey HSD, $M_{usually}$=22.9, $M_{sometimes}$=26.1, p<.001), and those that are seldom leaders (Tukey HSD, $M_{usually}$=22.9, M_{never}=26.3, p<.001).

| N | E | O | A | C |

Players who are usually leaders in groups score significantly higher in Extraversion (T[426]=-9.34, M_{always}(189)-16.6, M_{seldom}(239)=13.1, p<.001) and Conscientiousness (T[426]=-2.18, M_{always}(189)=15.4, M_{seldom}(239)=14.7, p=.03), and lower in Neuroticism (T[426]=2.65, M_{always}(189)=13.4, M_{seldom}(239)=14.4, p=.008) than those players who are seldom leaders in groups.

How often are you grouped with people you've grouped with before?

About half (52.9%, N=1237) of EQ players sometimes group with people they're grouped with before. 37% of players almost always group with people they've grouped with before, while 9.8% seldom do so. Female players are significantly more likely than male players to always group with people who they've grouped with before (%$_{male}$(1022)=34.7, %$_{female}$(189)=50.3, p<.001).

How often are you grouped with people you've grouped with before? (by gender)
N male = 1022, N female = 189
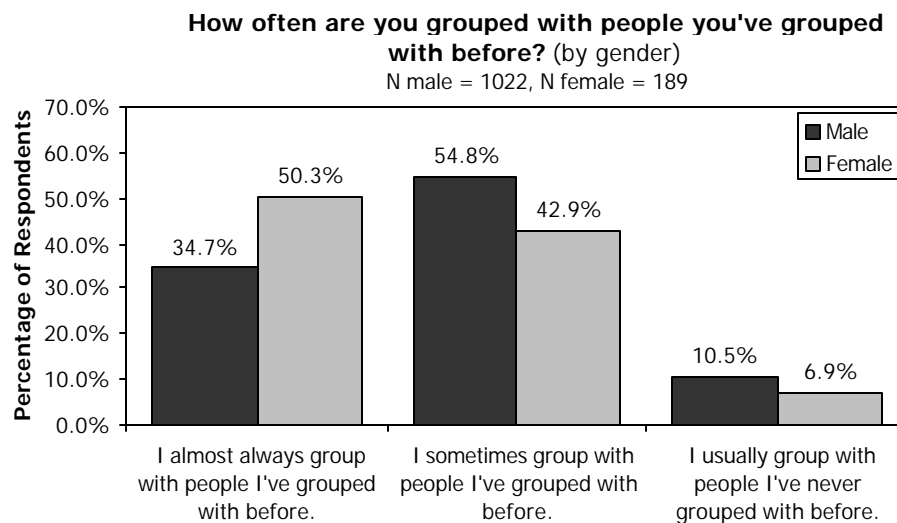
EQ players who always group with people they've grouped with before are significantly older (F[2,1203]=6.87, p=.001) than players who sometimes do so (Tukey HSD, M_{always}=26.7, $M_{sometimes}$=25.0, p=.001), and those who seldom do so (Tukey HSD, M_{always}=26.7, M_{seldom}=24.8, p=.05).

| N | E | O | A | **C** |

Players who almost always group with other players they've grouped with before score significantly higher on Conscientiousness (T[564]=2.73, M_{always}(444)=15.4, M_{seldom}(122)=14.5, p=.007) than those players who usually group with players they've never grouped with before.

How goal-oriented is your EQ play?

About half of EQ players (49.4%, N=1234) sometimes have goals in mind when playing EQ. 27.6% usually have goals in mind when they log on, while 22.5% do whatever comes up when they play EQ. Male players are significantly more likely than female players to have a goal in mind when playing the game ($\%_{male}(1021)=28.9$, $M_{female}(187)=19.3$, p=.006).

How goal-oriented is your EQ play? (by gender)
N male = 1021, N female = 187
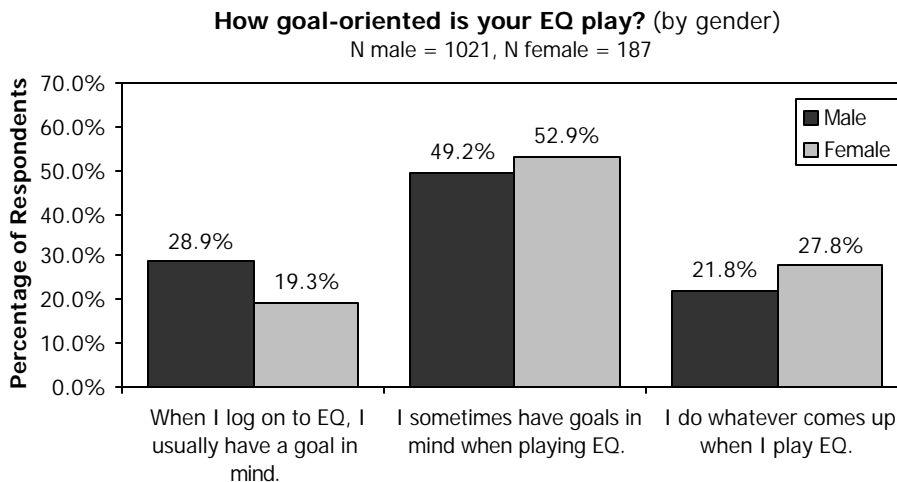
Players who are usually goal-oriented in EQ score higher on Conscientiousness ($T[556]=3.51$, $M_{usually}(302)=15.5$, $M_{seldom}(256)=14.4$, p<.001), and lower in Agreeableness ($T[556]=-2.71$, $M_{usually}(302)=18.4$, $M_{seldom}(256)=19.1$, p=.006) and Openness ($T[556]=-2.46$, $M_{usually}(302)=19.3$, $M_{seldom}(256)=19.9$, p=.01) when compared with players who are more spontaneous in EQ.

Exploring Biases in Assistance

The overwhelming majority of EQ players (80%, N=895) feel that female characters receive more assistance and are treated better than male characters.

In a Flash-implemented experimental design that manipulated character gender (male/female) and character race (gnome/half-elf/ogre), EQ players were assigned to one of 6 possible conditions (2 presented here):

1) *"You are near Qeynos and a newbie male half-elf approaches you asking for some spare change or low level items you could spare. Your character is level 20. Do you:"*
2) *"You are near Ogguk and a newbie female ogre approaches you asking for some spare change or low level items you could spare. Your character is level 20. Do you:"*

Participants were then asked to indicate on a 5 point scale how much assistance they would offer to the character, ranging from "say I don't give to beggars" (1) to "give a generous amount" (5). There was no significant effect in gender of participant. The gender of the presented character produced a significant effect ($F[1,530]=4.75$, p=.03), and it was found that female characters received significantly more assistance than male characters (Tukey HSD, $M_{male}=2.23$, $M_{female}=2.51$, p=.003). It was also found that female players offered significantly less assistance to male characters than male players offered to female characters (Tukey HSD, $M_{m-to-f}=2.54$, $M_{f-to-m}=2.05$, p=.03).

Generosity: Character and Player Gender

N = 542

Means marked with different alphabets are significantly different at p=.04
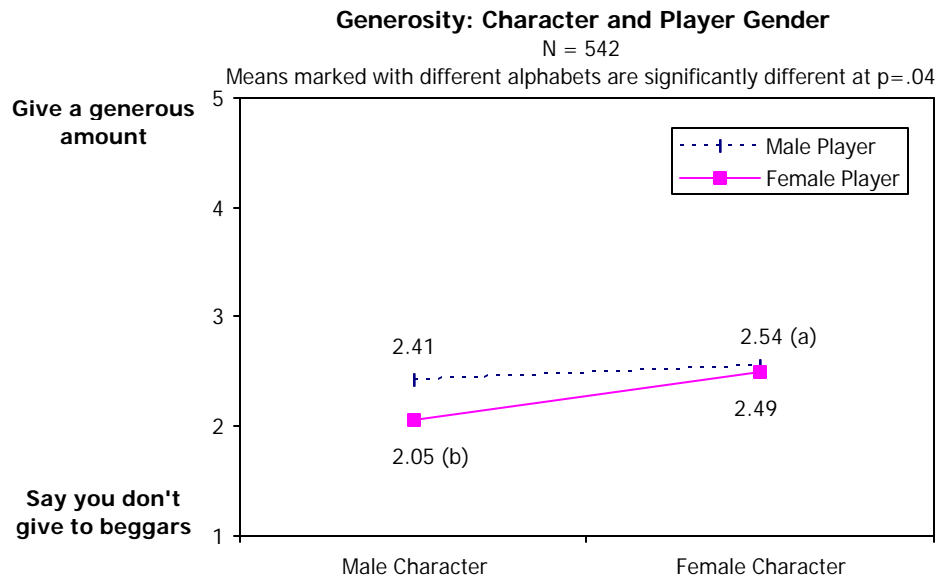
While race of presented character did not produce a significant effect, the analysis showed a possible trend in the interaction effect (F[2,530]=2.20, p=.11). The female gnome received significantly more assistance than the male gnome (Tukey HSD, M_{mgnome}=2.17, M_{fgnome}=2.68, p=.03), and the female half-elf received more assistance than the male half-elf (Tukey HSD, $M_{mhalfelf}$=2.08, $M_{fhalfelf}$=2.51, p=.10), but the female ogre received almost exactly what the male ogre received. In fact, the mean for the male ogre condition was slightly higher than the female ogre condition (Tukey HSD, M_{mogre}=2.45, M_{fogre}=2.36, p=.99).

Generosity: Race and Gender

N=542

Means with different alphabets are significantly different at p=.04
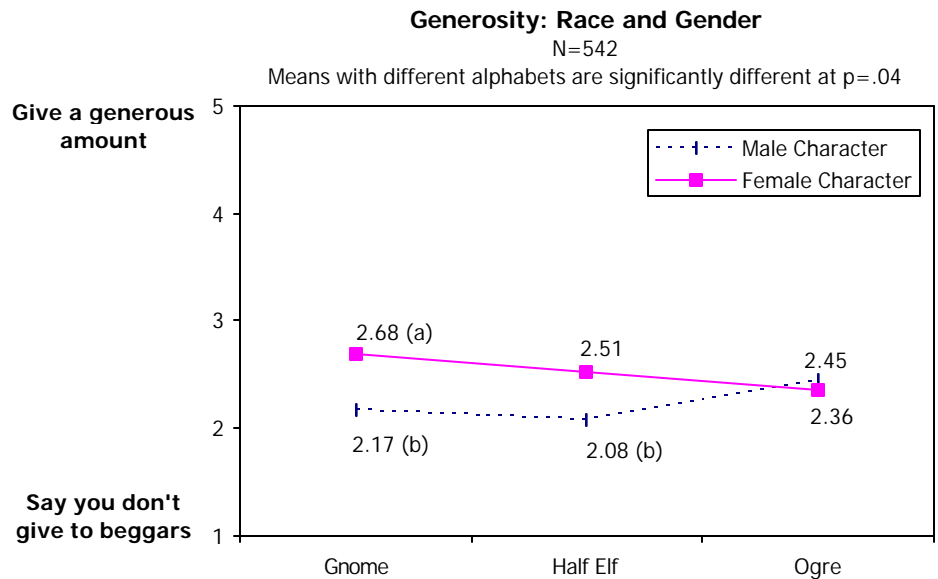
Guilds

Do you belong to a guild?

The majority (81.8%, N=1703) of EQ players belong to a guild. There are no significant age or gender differences.

N	**E**	O	A	C

Players who belong in guilds score significantly higher on Extraversion (T[601]=-3.11, $M_{yes}(503)=15.2$, $M_{no}(100)=13.9$, p=.002) than those players who do not belong in guilds.

If you are in a guild, are you in an officer/leader position?

About one-third (36.0%, N=1397) of players who are in guilds are in an officer or leader position. Female players are significantly more likely to be in officer or leader positions than male players are ($\%_{male}(1146)=33.9$, $\%_{female}(230)=45.2$, p<.001).

I am in a guild, and I am in an officer/leader position
N male = 1146, N female = 230
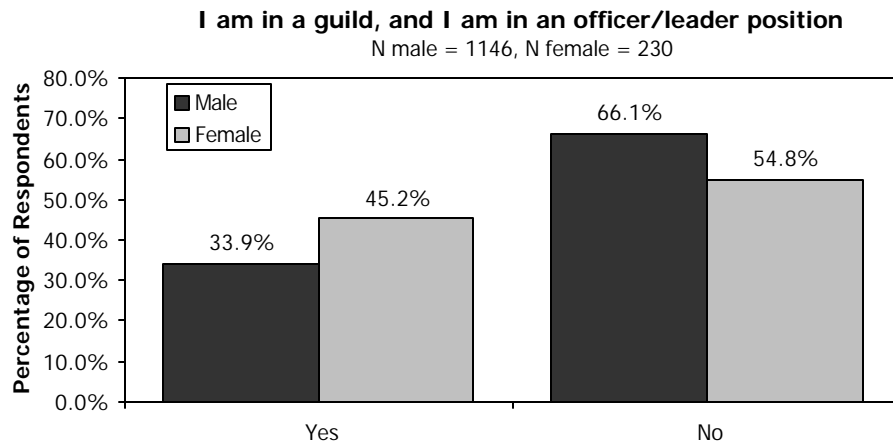
If you are in a guild, how often do you participate in guild events?

About half (51.9%, N=1374) of players who are in guilds either always or often participate in guild events. Female players are significantly more likely than male players to always participate in guild events ($\%_{male}(1145)=15.3$, $\%_{female}(229)=25.3$, p<.001).

If you are in a guild, how often do you participate in guild events?
N male =1145, N female = 229
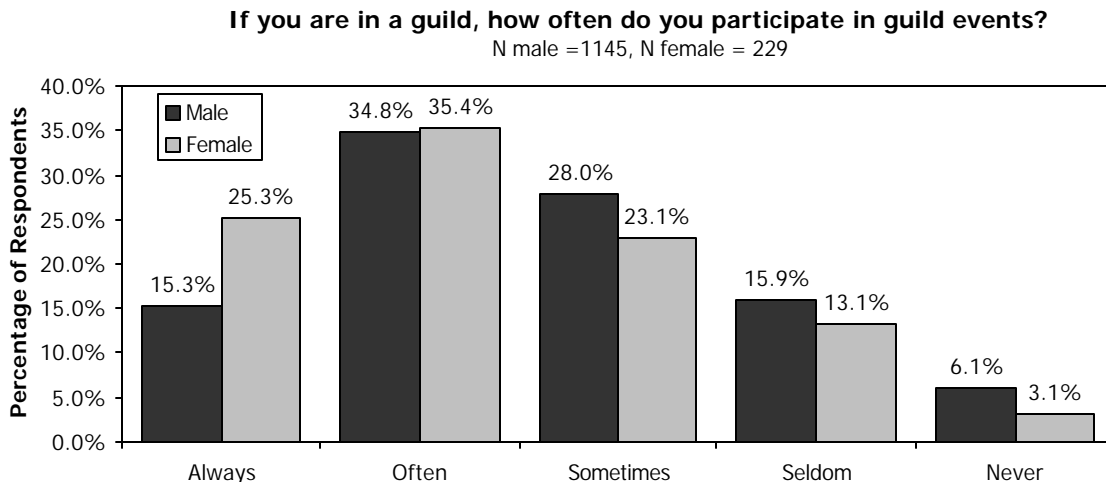
How much do you enjoy being in this guild?

While most players enjoy being in a guild, female players are significantly more likely than male players to enjoy being in a guild ($\%_{male}(1145)=48.7$, $\%_{female}(228)=63.2$, p<.001).

How Much Do You Enjoy Being in This Guild?

N male =1145, N female = 228
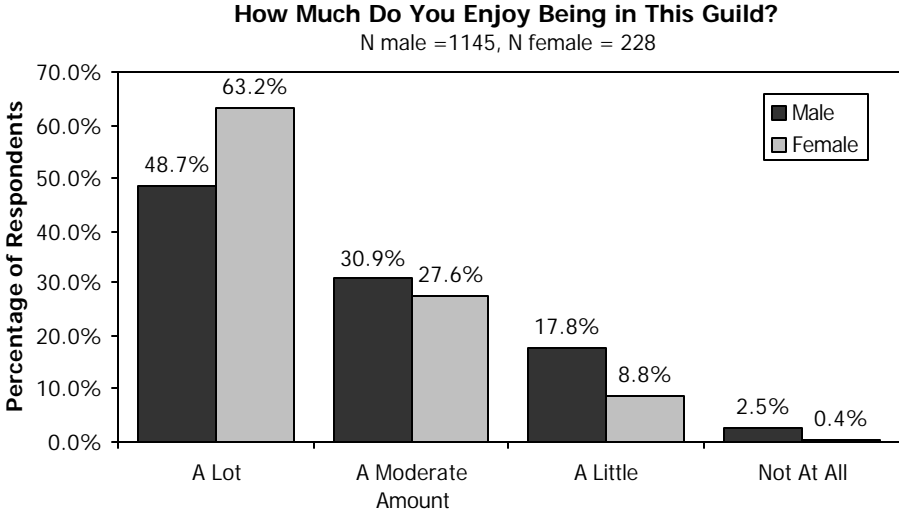
Gender-Bending

Frequency and Time Investment

**Do you have at least one character of the
opposite gender?** (by gender)
N male =1025, N female = 189
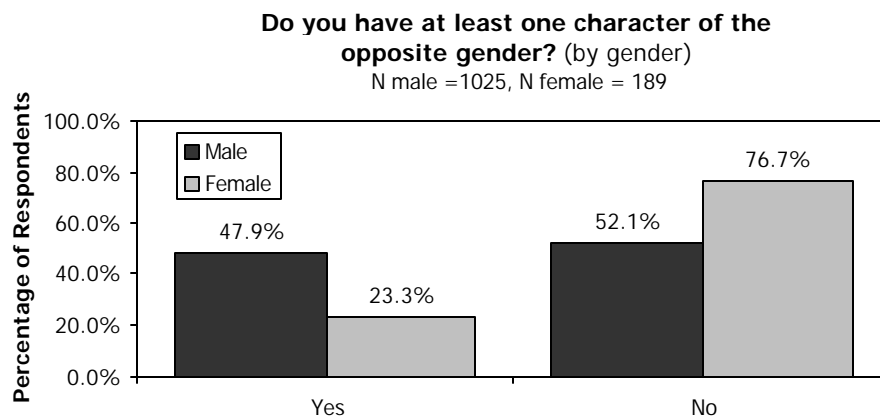
On average, EQ players have 4.96 (N=1236) characters on their account which are above level 5. There is no significant gender difference. Male players, however, have on average 1.24 (N=918) female characters above level 5, while female players have on average 0.39 (N=157) male characters above level 5. This is significant at the p=.03 level. Male players also have significantly more characters of the opposite gender than female players even when all their characters are counted, regardless of level (T[1196]=4.88, M_{male}(1010)=1.25, M_{female}(188)=0.44, p<.001).

Male EQ players who do have female characters report using them on average about 35.3% (N=275) of the time, while female players who do have male characters report using them on average about 14.2% of the time (N=51). This is significant at the p=.003 level.

N	E	**O**	A	**C**

Players in the top quartile of Openness are significantly more likely to have characters of the opposite gender when compared with those players in the bottom quartile (T[582]=-2.27, M_{bottom}(260)=0.81, M_{top}(324)=1.20, p=.02). Players in the bottom quartile of Conscientiousness are significantly more likely to have characters of the opposite gender when compared with those players in the top quartile (T[528]=3.93, M_{bottom}(251)=1.39, M_{top}(279)=0.70, p<.001).

Main Character and Highest Level Character

Only a minority (13.3%, N=898) of EQ players have a character of the opposite gender as their main character (character currently used the most). Male players, however, are significantly more likely than female players to have a main character of the opposite gender (%$_{male}$(731)=15.7, %$_{female}$(158)=2.5, p<.001).

N	E	**O**	A	**C**

Players who have a character of the opposite gender as their current main character, when compared with those players who have a character of the same gender as their current main character, score significantly higher on Openness (T[700]=2.38, M_{yes}(99)=14.3, M_{no}(603)=15.1, p=.01) and significantly lower on Conscientiousness (T[700]=-2.02, M_{yes}(99)=20.5, M_{no}(603)=19.8, p=.04).

**The character I am playing the most of currently
is of the opposite gender** (by gender)

N male = 731, N female = 158
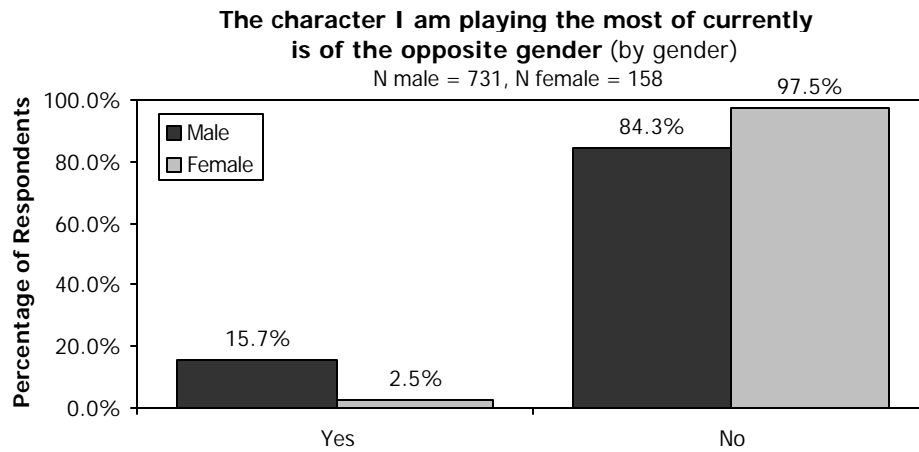
With regards to highest level character, again only a minority (12.6%, N=888) of EQ players have a character of the opposite gender as their highest level character. Male players, however, are significantly more likely than female players to have a character of the opposite gender as their highest level character ($\%_{male}$(731)=14.6, $\%_{female}$(157)=3.2, p<.001).

My highest level character is of the opposite gender

N male = 731, N female = 158
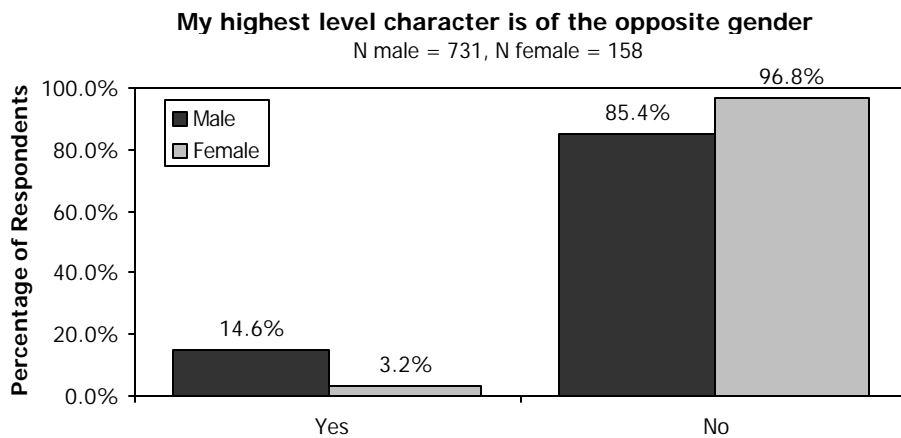
Reasons for Gender-Bending

Players who have characters of the opposite gender were asked to indicate their main reason for doing so from a list of reasons given. About a quarter of players who did gender-bend (27.4%, N=333) did so for role-play reasons, while another quarter (25.6%) did so because of the visual appearance of the opposite gender.

1) For role-play purposes: 27.4%
2) Visual appearance: 25.6%
3) Other: 16.8%
4) To gain advantage in game: 11.8%
5) Gender exploration: 7.1%

Female players who did gender-bend were significantly more likely to do so for gender exploration ($\%_{male}$=6.2, $\%_{female}$=21.1, p<.001). Male players who did gender-bend were slightly more likely to do so because of in-game advantages ($\%_{male}$=14.6, $\%_{female}$=5.3, p=.07).

Main Reason for Gender-Bending (by gender)
N male = 275, N female = 51
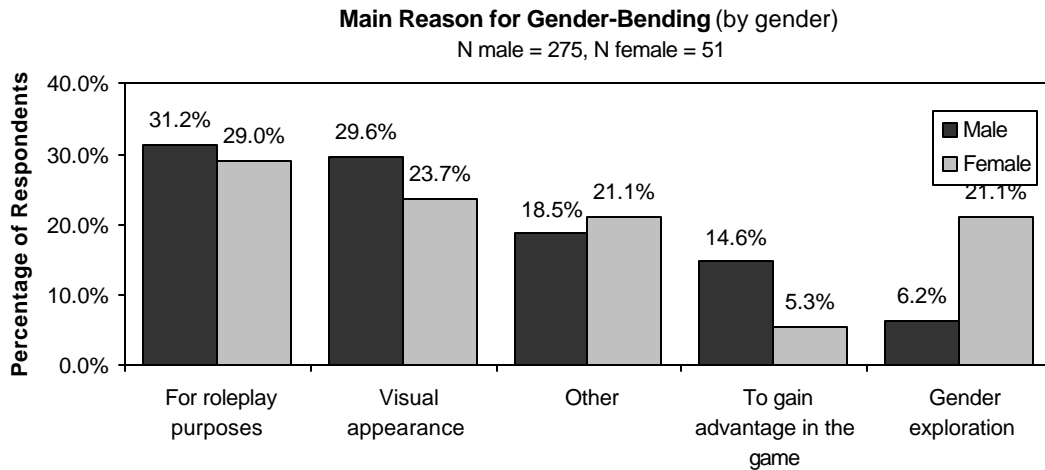
Reactions to Gender-Bending

In a Flash-implemented experimental design that manipulated the direction of gender-bending (male-to-female/female-to-male), EQ players were randomly assigned into 2 conditions:

1) *"You've adventured and become quite friendly with a male character. One day, the character tells you that she is female in real life. How much does this bother you?"*

2) *"You've adventured and become quite friendly with a female character. One day, the character tells you that he is male in real life. How much does this bother you?"*

Participants were asked to rate on a 5 point scale how much this bothered them, ranging from "Not At All" (1) to "A Lot" (5). There was a significant effect between the genders of the participants ($F[1,666]=5.83$, p=.01), and it was found that female EQ players were significantly more bothered by gender-bending than male EQ players were (Tukey HSD, $M_{male}(584)=1.64$, $M_{female}(86)=1.89$, p=.01). The direction of the gender-bending also produced a significant effect ($F[1,666]=5.38$, p=.02), and it was found that male-to-female gender-bending was significantly more troubling than female-to-male gender-bending (Tukey HSD, $M_{m\text{-}to\text{-}f}(317)=1.89$, $M_{f\text{-}to\text{-}m}(353)=1.64$, p<.001). There was also an interaction effect between gender of participant and direction of gender-bending ($F[1,666]=15.29$, p<.001). In particular, it was found that male players found female-to-male gender-bending significantly less troubling than the other 3 combinations.

How Much Does Gender-Bending Bother You?
N male = 584, N female = 86
Means with different alphabets are significantly different at p < .005

39
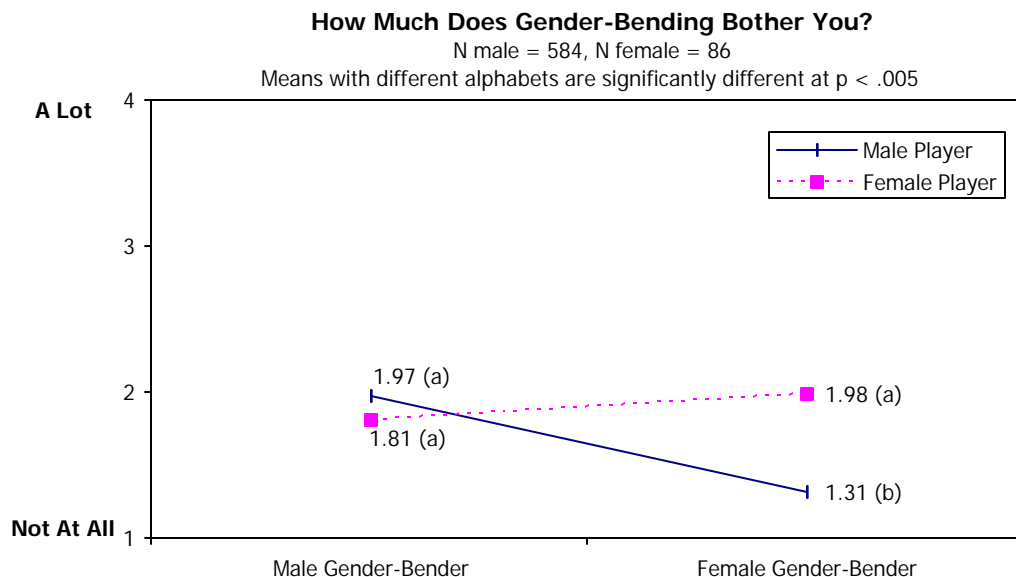
Many gamers cited visual appearance as a main reason for gender-bending:

Personally, for some of the races, the female graphic just "looks better" than the male graphic, and that is why I chose the female gender. The male graphics for some races just looks generic, and bland. [m, 22]

I really did not like the way female characters were drawn. They make me somewhat uncomfortable and could not imagine myself as that character. [f, ?]

mainly just because I like the appearance of the character [f, 22]

Several male respondents talked about the Tomb-Raider effect - the appeal of an aggressive yet attractive female:

Tomb Raider effect - I don't pine to be treated better or different by other players, I just like to see a woman kick some butt [m, 25]

She was my second character. I created a female because the thought of a ass kicking female sounded fun. I played her until 27 and lost interest in the class. She was a wood-elf ranger. [m, 35]

Um probably had something to do with lara croft i figured i would rater watch a pretty girl run around on the screen than a sweaty guy. [m, 22]

Other male respondents said that they wanted to gain more in-game advantages:

People in EQ are nicer to a cute Dark Elf girl. (Advantage, advantage) [m, 24]

Personally, you recieve a LOT more stuff when you start out as a female. Take my Barb Shammy for example. I was simply medding on the ramp in EverFrost, when a guy comes up to me and says " Hmmm Looks like you are looking for some new stuff " So he takes me into Halas and buys all Large Leather or better, and all my spells for lvls 1 and 4. Theres no contest that female characters get a lot more help. I help them too, though not as much because it is somtimes obvious that they are guys =/ [m, 14]

Some gamers used a character of the opposite gender for role-playing:

Roleplaying, mostly. I wanted to try something different. So when the iksar race came out, I didn't like how the females looked, and decided to finally try making a male character, to try roleplaying a male and to see how I was treated as well. After making my first male character, the two characters I have made since him have also been male. [f, 22]

I find a roleplaying experience (which is what EQ is to me) to be much more enjoyable when you are roleplaying someone that isn't very much like yourself-having a character of the opposite just happens to be one of many ways to create a character that is vastly different than yourself. [m, 14]

My other character is an enchantress, rather than an enchanter, for 3 reasons: 1) I see an enchanter/enchantress as more of a feminine character, from other gaming such as AD&D and Magic: the Gathering, and my own personal ideas. 2) Female

characters can get better prices when selling, since my enchantress is also a jewelcrafter...:) 3) Since the character is on a 2nd account, i enjoy the roleplaying i can produce from both characters. [m, 20]

There were some responses that didn't fit neatly into any of the categories mentioned already:

I thought the blond barbarian quite the hunk. And since it was obvious that none of my girls would get hooked up with one, I decided to play him myself.   [f, 39]

I created a male character strictly for the purpose of getting completely away from everything. It is the last place anyone would think to look for me. There are also times when I just don't feel like putting up with some dork who's found out that I'm female in real life following me around hitting on me. [f, 33]

When asked whether they found their characters of the opposite gender were being treated differently, both male and female players talked about the in-game advantages that came with being a female character:

Yes! I'm a level 12 High Elf, and I have a staff of the observers, and an FBR... neither of which I bought! Guys gave them to me. [m, 16]

Yup. The stereotypes apply. Boy characters didn't stop to help me the way they stop to help my female characters, and they didn't just walk up and start a conversation. [f, 37]

Female players who have tried playing male characters commented that male characters were treated more seriously, and given more respect:

Yes. I felt that I was taken a little more seriously. When I play my male characters, other male members of the party will listen to me better, take me more seriously. In my male form I could give orders and have them listened to, where as a female, my characters aren't always taken quite as seriously. Also, where my female characters were gifted many things when they were young and naked by random players, I didn't see it happening with my males, which I didn't mind at all. I've enjoyed the higher level of "respect" for my abilities that seems to come with playing in a male body. [f, 22]

I was in a group I had worked with for a while. I was playing my male paladin and trying to be the group tank. I was pulling the mobs too (in a rather dangerous zone). After a while, a conversation about our home lives started and I made a comment about my husband. Immediately the guys in the group asked me if I was really female in RL. When I confirmed it they started sending out another male character to pull the mobs. I found the whole group suddenly expecting me to do less melee. I'm not sure if they became protective of me or if they just assumed that a female would be less capable in the role of a tank. [f, 29]

When I'm playing a male character, I get a lot of "bro's" and more of a sense of cameraderie from the other male players, but that's about it. [f, 30]

When asked whether they had learned anything about the opposite gender, many male players talked about what they learned from being constantly harassed by male characters:

I never realized how irritating it can be to have to put up with unwanted advances. [m, 38]

I'm amazed how throughtless some people can be, how amazingly inept men are at flirting and starting a conversation with a female, and how it really does take more effort to be taken seriousely as a female versus a male. [m, 24]

No, I know most males think with their gonads, and act accordingly. They live up to my low expectations. [m, 25]

Several male players talked about the difference between female/female bonds versus male/male bonds:

yes....closer bonds to other female characters than any male/male character bonds. Also some male characters roleplay the "helping the lady" bit. I think I realized that women are much closer to each other than man are. [m, 35]

I have experienced jealousy at another female for looking prettier than me or getting more group praise than me. I have experienced very close bonds with other female characters (my "sisters") in the all-female guild I have joined. I have experienced men treating me as an unequal because I am female. [m, 30]

Whereas male players sometimes found the female character's world more accepting of emotions, female players found the male character's world more straight-forward and direct:

People were more passionate about things..If someone died and I began to crie, all those around me began to comfort me. That would never happen if I was a male [m, 22]

I enjoy seeing how long they assume I'm male in RL and I find that conversation is more direct and honest in a male group. [f, 29]

Yes, the fact that other male characters would listen to me better and have a greater amount of respect for my abilities. [f, 22]

Some female players commented that being male wasn't as easy as they thought it would be:

I used to think men had it easy! Now I know they have issues too; they are socialized to be more independent and not ask for help. That has to be tough. [f, 37]

I learned that I use too many hehe's and :)'s to play a guy, that people are far less helpful and friendly, if they responded at all. I had never tried playing a character of another gender before. [f, 23]

When asked whether they thought they had learned anything about themselves from their virtual gender-bending experiences, several respondents talked about an increased awareness of their own masculinity or femininity, or how it let them see society differently:

I have learned how to flirt, how to be sexual with peole in RL, and most importantly, I now value being a woman, for the first time in my life. Always before I have focused on the lack of respect, the expectation of lower quality work from women, and felt that being a woman i was automatically disrespected. In eq, i can plainly see that i am respected just for being a woman, and can now see how in rl, that happens too. That both viewpoints occur. Somehow, I am able to look at this mess of contradictions and value myself more. That I am a lot more sexual than I have thought of myself in the last few years. That being a woman can be a lot of fun. [f, 40]

As I got to see how the rest of Norrath treats males and females, I came to realize that, try as I might, I don't treat men and women equally in RL myself. [m, 25]

Aside: So How Many Female Characters Are Played By Men?

We know that about 16% of EQ players are female and 84% are male (N=1240). Given a hypothetical pool of 1000 EQ players, 160 are female and 840 are male.

About 47.9% of male players have at least one character of the opposite gender (N=1025), and about 23.3% of female players have at least one character of the opposite gender (N=189). Thus, in our hypothetical population:

Of 840 male players, 402 have female characters, 438 do not.
Of 160 female players, 37 have male characters, 123 do not.

Of the players who have characters of the opposite gender, male players use a female character about 35.3% of the time (N=275), and female players use a male character about 14.2% of the time (N=51). So, at any given time in our hypothetical pool:

Of 840 male players:
        402 have female characters, of which 142 are using a female character, while 260 are using a male character.
        438 do not have female characters, and thus 438 are using male characters.
Of 160 female players:
        37 have male characters, of which 5 are using a male character, while 32 are using a female character.
        123 do not have male characters, and thus 123 are using female characters.

So in this hypothetical population, we have:
        260+438+5=703 male characters, of which 5 (1%) are played by female players.
        142+32+123=297 female characters, of which 142 (48%) are played by male players.

Thus, about 48% of the female characters you meet in the game are actually played by male players.

Gaming with a Romantic Partner

Well...he is a little hack'n'slash-happy... [f, 21, dating]

She likes big glowing swords a lot. [m, 20, dating]

Basics

About 24.3% (N=1094) of EQ players play the game with a romantic partner. There is a significant gender difference. 69.5% of female players play the game with a romantic partner, while only 16.4% of male players do (p<.001). Of those EQ players who play the game with a romantic partner, about 43.8% (N=160) are dating. 38.1% are married, 14.4% are engaged, while 3.8% are lifetime partners.

I Play EQ With My Romantic Partner
N=160
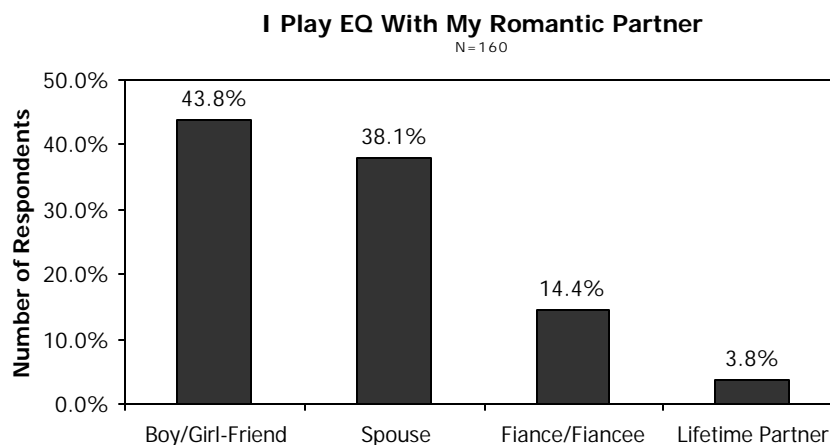
How Long Have You Been Playing Together?

The majority of EQ players who game with a romantic partner have been playing together for 5-10 months (N=160).

How Long Have You Been Playing With Your Romantic Partner?
N=160
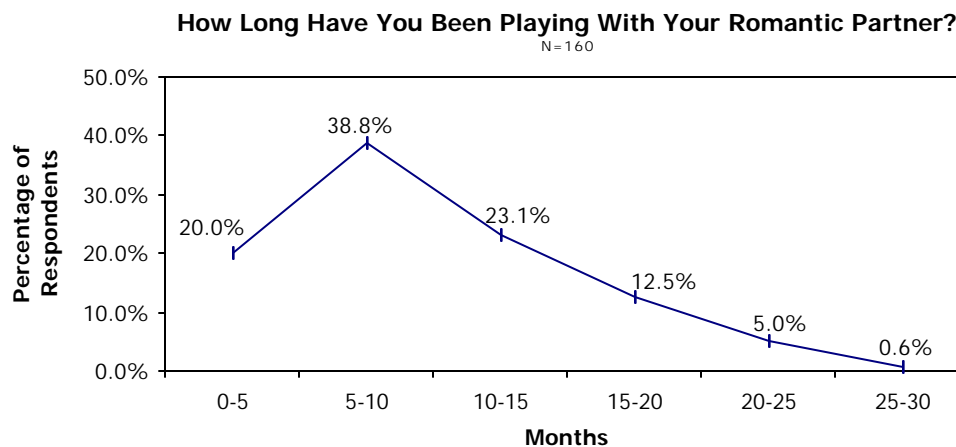
Was The Game Purchased To Be Played Together?

Of those EQ players who game with a romantic partner, about one-third (33.8%, N=160) purchased the game specifically as something they could do together.

How often are you grouped?

Of those EQ players who game with a romantic partner, about a third (35%, N=160) say they almost always are grouped with their partner. Another 20% say that they are often grouped. Only 11.3% say that they are almost never grouped with their romantic partner.

How Often Are You Grouped With Your Romantic Partner?
N=160
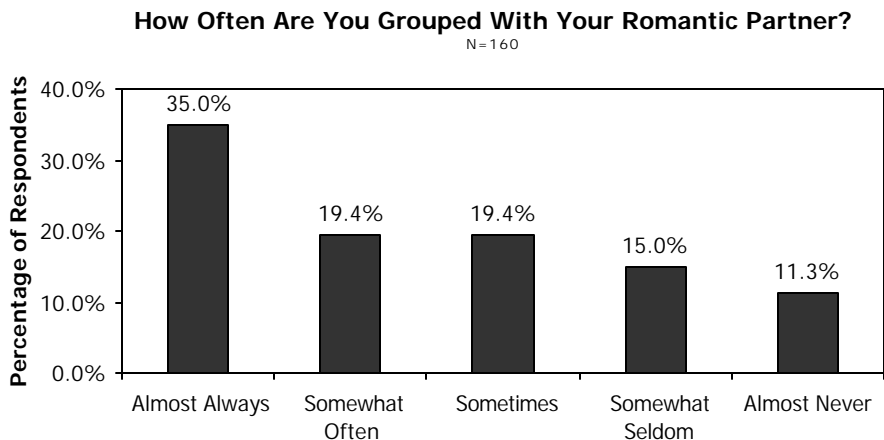
In Their Own Words

Oftentimes, one of the pair grew interested in the game from watching the other play:

She became an Evercrack addict from watching me play [m, 29, engaged]

I had been playing EQ before, and I encouraged her to start. (She's since levelled past me, the Ingrate! hehe) We're separated geographically, so we can't play side by side. [m, 34, dating]

He brought home the game and played about a week while I made fun of it. He started telling me about the people he had met and it got me interested. I started playing soon there after.. [f, 25, engaged]

I bought EQ as a present for my fiance, he didn't install the game for weeks after I bought it for him, so one day I installed it and started playing. Next thing you know I'm going into the other room going "honey, help me......". Then we started playing a character together one doing mouse controls and the other the keyboard. Finally we had to buy a second copy so we both could play. [f, 27, engaged]

Sometimes, it was through some devious planning or back-fires:

I intially started playing because i was trying to prove a point how dreadful it was to sit and watch someone play a game for hours at a time .. then i was hooked and we decided together to both start playing together .. we started new characters in the same starting spots and played .. we do not play side by side [f, 24, dating]

My boyfriend got me addicted to it on purpose...he even upgraded my computer so that I could play with him. He figured I would like it, because of my previous RPG stuff as a teen. We currently have 4 duos, created specifically as partners. [f, 30, dating]

In fact, it can happen the other way around as well, with the relationship beginning in EQ instead of real-life:

Actually we met in EQ in January, she was a level 22 ranger and I was a level 19 ranger. She powerlevelled me on aviak guards in Lake Rathe. We weren't actually boyfriend/girlfriend until this summer, and met in real life in August ;) [m, 20, dating]

It happened quite as chance, we happened just to see each other near the POD lift in Gfay, and started talking.. eventually things became more involved... [m, 18, dating]

Some gamers claimed that playing together was so enjoyable that they would not play without their partner:

I wouldnt play without her. Having the bond she and I share and having it come from a video game somewhat ties us to the game itself, sort of like it is a substitute for "our song". [m, 20, dating]

I also found that I didn't really feel like playing unless she was there, it just wasn't the same. [m, 21, dating]

As much as I love the game I could not imagine playing without him now. [f, 35, dating]

Others suggested that playing together enhanced game-play:

EQ is a lot more fun with someone you can speak to in the room. I have fun messing with my grilfriend in the game. In a full group I sometimes give indications to what she's doing before she gets a chance to (i.e. I'll say, "inc" when she's pulling mobs. Its also nice to be able to look at another monitor and get another view of the world. [m, 26, dating]

it most definitely enhances the enjoyment. we are able to use our characters to be a bit more "open" to one another in the company of others and gain reactions that may otherwise be looked at as inappropraite in public places. this falls along the lines of a fantasy cyber-date where you can step out of one role and into another. [m, 29, dating]

Many gamers however, talked about the tensions playing together would create, and how playing together could actually make game-play difficult:

Sometimes it's great... he's protective over me and looks after me online. Often he'll sacrifice his character's life for mine so that I will be safe, not lose experience, etc. When we're having a good time, obviously, it's great. There are times though, that it's miserable. He can get VERY jealous over who my characters talk to and heaven forbid some compliment me. It's tidious sometimes and it makes me wish we didn't play together. [f, 20, engaged]

I can't stand to watch her play. I want her to do things my way and she does them her way and we just clash when we play together. [m, 25, engaged]

However, our styles are totally different. For instance, I will rather play in a group just for company, even if the exp gain is minimal, whereas my partner tends to literally AVOID other players. I am often a pushy roleplayer, forcing others to RP or get out of my face. Thus I am unafraid of starting an argument, whether in /say, /tell or even /shout. This seems to make my

partner very uncomfortable. For these reasons, if we are playing together we try very hard to compromise. However, I insist on having 'solo' characters that I only play on my own. I tend to find his gaming style restrictive. [f, 23, engaged]

My characters are flirtatious.. I am more outgoing and sexual online; it's just a function of not being face to face with people. He had to deal with jealousy problems from the attention I receive, and I had to learn that I can't act how I usually do. We hardly play at all anymore, and it's really helped our relationship. [f, 19, dating]

When asked whether they had learned anything about their partner because of playing together in EQ, most respondents thought that EQ highlighted the best and worst of their partners:

I learned that he really does nothing without a purpose, even in playing a game. He's extremely goal-oriented - likes to see that gold experience bar move, where I'm not quite as experience obsessed as he is. [f, 25, engaged]

Well....I see her best and worst traits in the game. She has a terrible temper that comes out in the game at times. [m, 30, dating]

I realized, in game and in RL, just how nice, fair minded, and honorable he is. [f, 30, dating]

Not really but everything comes out of the woodwork if you will. What I mean by this is, take the following instance as an example. My g/f is scared of trying new things and when she does it takes her a while to warm up to whatever she's doing. This REALLY shows itself in the game as her not wanting to attack anything she's not comfortable with. I'm not talking about a normal situation where the mob would con red/yellow/white to you but I'm talking about because that mob "LOOKS" bad (even if it's green or blue) she will not go near it. Frustrating but that's not the point ... the point is that the fear of things new comes out in the game and you can really see it more clearly in the game than in RL (I mean how many Orc Centurions do you know that are running around in RL?). [m, 24, dating]

No. We know each other well IRL. The only thing that EQ has done is affirmed my feelings about my wife's personality, intellect, basic kindness and rationality etc. [m, 54, married]

Sometimes, respondents reflected on how playing together highlighted their individual differences:

I was not aware how shy he is of speaking out 'in public' (in EQ, this translates into /shout or /ooc, of course). He will often scorn me for getting involved into a public channel discussion or try and stop me. [f, 23, engaged]

Yeah, he's a real risk-taker in the game, much more so than in actual life. I'm the opposite. Also, he starts conversations with others much more easily than in EQ than in RL. Again, I'm the opposite. [f, 37, dating]

Not really. It did further emphasize that she is a much more sociable person than am I, as she tends to make more friends in the game than I do, but I was pretty much aware of that beforehand. [m, 30, married]

I'm not sure. That's really a tough question. I would say rather than having learned something new about him, it was more like it emphasied differences between us that I already knew about. He is very patient, I am very impulsive, etc. And these differences are a lot more apparent in a game situation. [f, 27, dating]

Gamers sometimes commented indirectly on how differently men and women approach the game itself:

He is really turned on by the power and prestige aspects of the game, whereas I use it as an extended chatroom. So we had some conflict over me getting twinked out purely because I was a real woman. (His main is a female, which was also something new. I didn't appreciate not being able to be his girlfriend in game to, or that in order to be so I would have to become a lesbian. I also had to accept that his playing female characters was a roleplaying decision, and I still think that it is a little strange.) [f, 19, dating]

I didn't realize quite how obsessive he was. . .I try to moderate my EQ time, I don't like to play more than a few hours a day, and when I go on raids or spend 8+ hourse playing, I nearly never play the next day. My husband's played for 30+ hours straight. [f, 22, married]

However, our styles are totally different. For instance, I will rather play in a group just for company, even if the exp gain is minimal, whereas my partner tends to literally AVOID other players. [f, 23, engaged]

Several female respondents commented on the over-protectiveness of their partners:

Oh yes, One of the main reasons i have begun to lose interest in him, was from the way he would always take kills from me, and shielding me so as to keep me safe... Well With him being a wizard and me a cleric, we all know i can whoop his butt ;) So knowing this i observed when we hung out in real life next, and sure enough he is Way too overprotective and jealous. I never noticed it until the game tho. [f, 24, dating]

Respondents had very varied feelings as to whether EQ had enhanced or damaged their relationships. Some felt that EQ had taken over their relationship:

Damaged. We spend too much time back to back at our computers typing away and sharing time and experiences with our friends in Norrath. And because EQ is so demanding of time in order to keep up with those friends, each of us has dedicated literally MONTHS of time to a rediculous game that neither of us will stop playing right now but both wish we would. [f, 23, married]

Well, I think we sometimes play EQ instead of being close to one another physically (not necessarily intimate, but that too). I don't think that's good. [m, 30, married]

When you stick two people in a room who are complete addicts to this game...let's just say that neither of us has the will to function in RL anymore, and neither of us is strong enough to attempt to end the addiction for both of us. Our addiction feeds on us, we feed on it and we feed on each other's. [f, 24, dating]

Both. We have common ground, as mentioned above, but she likes the game too much. She plays it too much! We don't do anything else, it seems. When we go out, she gets bored and says how she would rather be playing EQ. Our social life has dropped significantly. [m, 30, dating]

On the other hand, other gamers talked about how EQ made it easier for them to resolve real-life communication issues, and enhanced the relationship:

I think it has enhanced the relationship. He and I both tend to hold in emotions and thoughts, but when we are in game we can comfortably let the other know thru emotes and such. [f, 28, engaged]

If anything it has enhanced the relationship. Before we had problems with communication. Through Everquest we have learned to communicate or suffer the consequences, which are quite "visible" where as not communicating with my partner caused unseen damages. [m, 17, dating]

It's meant we can explore changing roles (for example my being group leader, whereas in our day-to-day lives he is more often in charge of the people around us (his employees) than I am) and also given us something fun to do together. [f, 32, dating]

Our relationship has definately been enhanced. We're better now at working together towards goals. And we both really enjoy growing, learning and adventuring together. It's exciting to be involved in each other's triumphs. And it feels good to help each other (sometimes it seems like a race to see which one of us can save the other). [f, 29, married]

Men are from Ogguk. Women are from Kelethin.

A character in a MMORPG is a projection of the self. When an EverQuest gamer plays the game, they are projecting a part of themself into this virtual world. But a character, or an avatar, in such an environment is an interesting combination of both illusion and reality, containing elements of both "you" and "not you" at the same time. It is "you" in the sense that your character speaks, reacts and acts in ways that parallel how you might in real life. On the other hand, a character is "not you" because none of us are really Wood-Elves or Necromancers in real life. But because players spend a lot of time in developing their characters and in building up their social networks, they become personally invested in their characters. And when a player is personally invested, every choice that they make within this virtual construct is personally revealing. Thus, we would expect that differences among individuals are also projected into EverQuest.

We could ask, for example, how gender is projected into EverQuest. What differences in role-playing preferences or in-game behaviors can we find between male and female players? Does EverQuest appeal to male and female players in the same way? Do they continue to play for the same reasons? Or do they get different things out of playing the game?

Demographically, female players comprise 16% of the EverQuest player base. Female players are significantly older than male players (pg. 10).

There are many ways we could begin to ask how male and female players project themselves differently in EverQuest, but first we have to establish that EverQuest provides room for variation. In EverQuest, a gamer could choose to never communicate with anyone else. They could play the game as if it were a single-player game. A gamer could also choose to never kill a creature. Almost no one plays at these extremes, but between these two extremes is room for variation. It is the possibility of variation that makes it meaningful to ask whether male and female players find the game appealing because of different reasons.

We found that female players find the social interaction of the game significantly more appealing than male players (pg. 17). Male players, on the other hand, are significantly more likely to enjoy the sense of power the game gives (pg. 17). As several respondents commented,

He is really turned on by the power and prestige aspects of the game, whereas I use it as an extended chatroom. So we had some conflict over me getting twinked out purely because I was a real woman. [f, 19, dating]

It's something we both enjoy, but we tend to enjoy it seprately. I enjoy it because of the social aspect, while he just enjoys the game itself. [f, 23, engaged]

We also found that female players are significantly more likely to always group with people they've grouped with before when compared with male players (pg. 32). Male players, on the other hand, are significantly more likely to have a goal in mind when logging onto EQ when compared with female players (pg. 33). As an example,

For instance, I will rather play in a group just for company, even if the exp gain is minimal, whereas my partner tends to literally AVOID other players. [f, 23, engaged]

We begin to get a sense that perhaps while female players play EverQuest to build relationships, male players play EverQuest for achieving goals. If this is the case, we would expect that female players spend more time in both sustaining and participating in social groups within EverQuest.

Guilds are one kind of sustained social network in EverQuest. When respondents were asked to indicate whether they belonged to a guild, 80% of respondents replied that they did belong to a guild (pg. 35). Male and female players are equally likely to belong to guilds. Superficially, it appears that there is no gender difference in participation in guilds, but if we look a little closer, we find that this is not the case at all. Female players are significantly more likely to be in officer or leader positions within guilds than male players (pg. 35). Female players are also significantly more likely to participate in guild events than male players (pg. 35). Thus, it isn't surprising that female players find belonging to a guild significantly more enjoyable than male players (pg. 36).

We can refine what we've noted so far about gender differences. Perhaps for female players, the focus of the game is in building relationships, and killing mobs is something you can do while chatting, whereas for the male players, the focus of the game is in killing mobs, and chatting is something you have to do to coordinate battle plans. Perhaps female players find social partners in EverQuest, while male players find hunting partners. A set of findings support this dichotomy.

Respondents were asked to indicate how appealing a set of hypothetical changes to the game would be. Female players are significantly more likely than male players to find enhanced emotes appealing (pg. 20). This is what we would expect because enhanced emotes make it easier to develop social cohesion. Male players, on the other hand, are significantly more likely than female players to find more weapon and spell types appealing (pg. 20). Having more weapon and spell types is really having more ways to kill mobs, and again this is what we might have expected.

Because female players focus on developing social relationships within EverQuest, while male players do not necessarily care about building social relationships, it is the female players who are more likely to make friends in EverQuest. And we do find that female players are significantly more likely than male players to feel that their EverQuest friendships are better or comparable to their real-life friendships, while male players are significantly more likely to feel their EverQuest friendships do not come close to their real-life friendships (pg. 27).

A corollary of this is that because female players are making real friends in EverQuest, and view EverQuest as a social community rather than just a game, they are significantly more likely than male players to feel that valuable things can be learned from EverQuest, as opposed to male players who are significantly more likely than female players to feel that very little of value can be learned from the game (pg. 21).

Because male players play EverQuest to gain satisfaction from achieving goals, we would expect that the ability to hack the game would be more appealing to them. And indeed we do find that male players are significantly more likely than female players to hack the game if this were possible (pg. 21).

Female players play EverQuest to build relationships and we have already seen that they do develop meaningful friendships in the game comparable to real-life friends. Female players also feel that valuable things can be learned from EverQuest. In a very real sense, EverQuest is not just a game to female players. To female players, EverQuest is more relevant and meaningful than it is to the male players. And the more relevant something is to an individual, the more likely they are to dream about it. And we do find that female players are significantly more likely to dream about EverQuest than male players (pg, 63).

Finally, we can see this augmented relevance to female players revealed by attachment to their characters. Respondents were asked whether they would sell their main character at a price determined by their level. We found that female players are significantly less willing to sell their characters when compared with male players (pg. 24).

Beyond just personal investment and attachment, we can also look at emotional investment. Because female players are interested in building relationships, we would expect to find that they are more willing to emotionally invest themselves in the game, while male players should be much less willing to do so.

In a sense, this is already true going into the game. About 70% of female players are playing EverQuest with a romantic partner (pg. 13). But we could also look at falling in love and role-playing romantic relationships within the game. And again we find that female players are significantly more likely than male players to role-play romantic relationships with another character or actually fall in love with another character or player (pg. 28).

Because very few computer games have allowed female players to build relationships the way that EverQuest has, it would be interesting to know whether female players find the game more appealing than male players do. We found that female players are significantly more likely than male players to feel that EverQuest is the best computer game that they have ever played (pg. 20).

This question was also asked in a more refined way. A list of different sources from which satisfaction could be achieved was generated, and respondents were asked to indicate how much satisfaction they got from each of the items. Female players, unsurprisingly, get significantly more satisfaction from making friends. But we found that female players also get significantly more satisfaction from completing complex craft items and from completing a quest, both of which are goal-oriented and which we might expect to appeal to male players more. More surprisingly, we also found that female players get more satisfaction from killing mobs than male players do (pg. 19). Although these findings seem to contradict the model we have been trying to develop, this is not necessarily the case. Female players generally do not like hack and slash games, such as Quake, because it is all about goal-driven achievement. EverQuest allows female players to build social relationships, and crafting complex trade items or completing quests is something they can do within the context of social relationships. So in a sense, the satisfaction from sustaining social relationships spills over into other areas. Female players are not just hunting mobs. Female players are hunting mobs with their good friends, while male players are more likely to be hunting with strangers. And it is the nesting of one activity within a social relationship that makes it more satisfying to female players than male players.

In conclusion, our findings allow us to build a cohesive model of how gender projects into EverQuest. Female players tend to be socializers. They play EverQuest to develop and sustain social relationships. They are more likely to emotionally invest themselves into the game, and are more likely to feel that their EverQuest relationships are better or comparable to their real-life relationships. EverQuest is more relevant and meaningful to female players and they are more likely to feel that important things can be learned from playing the game. Male players, on the other hand, tend to be achievers. They play EverQuest to gain satisfaction from achieving goals. They are much less likely to feel that their EverQuest friendships are comparable to their real-life friendships. They are less likely to emotionally invest themselves into EverQuest and are more likely to feel that virtual romance is strange. Finally, male players are more likely to feel that EverQuest is "just a game" and that nothing important can be learned from it.

Gaming with a Parent or Child

We have our tense moments when things ingame get hot. Truth is, rearly do just one of us dies. We normaly go down together trying to save each other (hehe). There may be a fleeting moment when one of us is made, but ultimintly we laugh it off. That's probly heathly. The other thing is I get to use the game as motivation for him to do well in chores/school. Ie... If your grades fall you will not get to play on weeknights. [m, 38]

My daughter, 4 1/2, doesn't like for me to kill the "pretty wolves". But killing the "gorillas" (orcs) is ok! [m, 37]

Basics

About 8.1% (N=898) of EQ players play the game with a parent or child. In my sample of 51 EQ gamers who play with their parent or child, 36 play the game with a child, while 15 play the game with a parent. Most of these gamers have been playing the game together for 5-20 months.
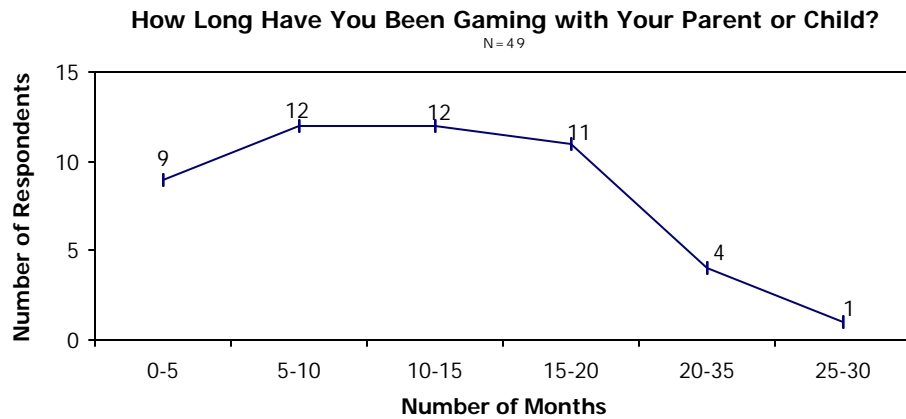
6 of these 51 players purchased EQ specifically as something to do together. Most of these gamers are only sometimes or seldom grouped with their parent or child.

53
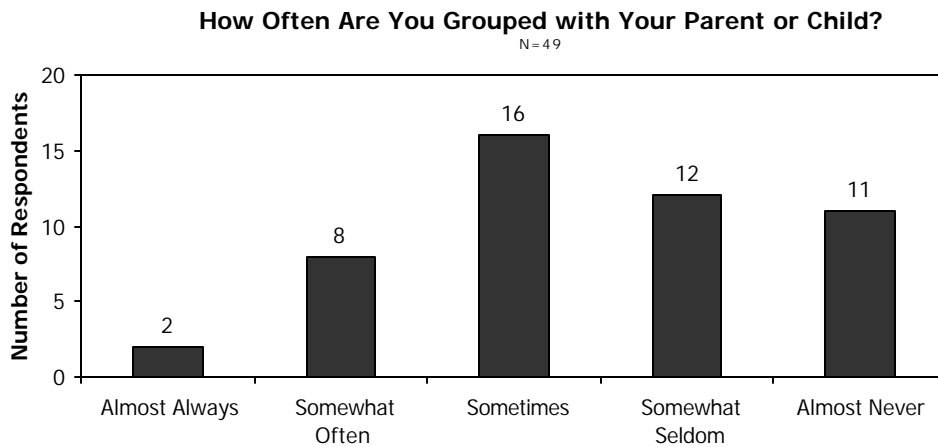
In many cases, a parent started playing after watching their child play, and tried playing for a bit:

It came to be because my mom and dad saw me and my siblings playing, and decided to try it. They loved it, so eventually bought another comp so we could group occaisionally. I play side by side with the parent I live with, and still group with my other parent in a different state. [f, 18]

I am a soldier stationed in Germany. Last year I bought EQ because my friends did, in that time my character grew and became a guildleader. I would sometimes tell my dad about EQ and things I have done, he became interested and bought it. I created a second character so I could group with him from time to time. He enjoys the game as much as I do and yes, he is in my guild. [m, 24]

Was my son's game and after complaing of how much time he played he suggested I try it, ok well now I am hooked- hehe went out and bought another account [f, 36]

But it happens the other way too, and children often get interested when they see their parents playing EverQuest:

Actually I use it as more of a learning tool, my daughter is quite young, but fascinated by computers, and computer art. She's four to be exact, and beginning to learn to read. We probably only spend an hour or so each week playing her character. The idea was both of ours actually, she wanted to "pick a face" and I decided that we'd continue with the character. [m, 28]

My son harrassed me until I gave in. I never let him out of my sight in game because I honestly feel he's still too young and immature for the community. [f, 33]

Playing EQ with a parent or child can enhance game-play:

Playing with my father makes me feel a little safer, as his characters are higher level, and it makes me totally at ease in my group. I thoroughly enjoy playing with him, I think it is more fun than playing alone. [f, 14]

I enjoy playing EQ with my daughter, and it has helped her learn to spell better and to learn how to get along with others. [f, 28]

She see's things differently than i do and i find that fun to see. [m, 29]

On the other hand, it can make game-play difficult:

Definitely. Our character conflicts come out more. It's a nightmare grouping with her, because the game scares her and she doesn't want to take risks. It does NOT enhance it. [f, 28]

My 6 year old always wanted to play. Since we just had another child my wife isn't playing much right now. No. She drives me crazy, so I don't play with her. [m, 34]

Playing with him is difficult. Because he's not a role-player like I am. He's there for the hack & slash. 40 year olds, for the most part, can't conceive of the whole meaning of RPG-type games. They grew up on pinball machines where score was a factor. I grew up with AD&D. Simple as that =) [m, 29]

Some parents commented indirectly on how EQ adds new meaning to parenting:

Yes, when,we are play togeather and fight (we are both tanks) and she is getting hurt it adds a little fear to me even thiugh i know it is just a game her charcter is my charcyers daughter in the game i still feel that protectiveness over her. [m, 39]

I have spent some time "babysitting" his character until he was high enough level to group with me. [m, 33]

When asked whether they learned anything about their parents from their game-play together, children often commented on their parent's typing skills:

He can't type. [f, 14]

I only found out how bad his typing skills actually are [m, 16]

I only learned that he doesn't pay quite as close attention to detail as I do, but I didn't really expect that he'd do so. [m, 14]

When parents were asked the same question, some talked about how the game made them aware of how much their children know and understand:

She knows quite a bit more than I expected from a four year old! [m, 28]

It made me realize how much a 9 yr old child knows and understands! [f, 28]

Others commented that EQ allowed them to observe their children in social situations that they usually had no access to:

I get to see him interact with people. Most dont realize who he is or our relationship. I see alot of myself in the way he approches relationships. Makes me proud. [m, 38]

I merely added depth and clarity to many traits that I knew they had to see how they presented themselves in a different environment. Since I am pretty much removed from their circle of friends and can't watch them at school, EQ provides a window into their behavoir outside of the house [f, 37]

I found that my son handles himself in a very mature manner. (He's 13 now). I have also been told by many other players that know of our relationship how courteous and well spoken he is. He understands that it is basically a game played by adults for the most part and he manages to fit in very well. [m, 49]

Some parents were pleasantly surprised at traits or social skills they never knew their children had:

I learned that my son is a very good strategist. I knew that to a degree before, but it has been eye opening to watch him lead a group. I did not know he had these skills. [f, 49]

He has a VERY good sense of humor. He can and does know how to interact with others in a cooperative venture. He also can be very giving and helpful when others seem to need it. [m, 43]

Both parents and children felt that playing EQ together had enhanced their relationship. First it gave them something in common to talk about, and thus more opportunities to talk:

Enhanced, we will spend hours talking about our experiences and such. [m, 24]

Enhanced. We talk tons more now, which is cool. [m, 26]

Parents commented on how EQ could be used as a teaching-medium:

It provides a common ground for talking, a way I can give them "gifts" (in game) that I otherwise could not afford to do, and a common basis for discussing real-life issues, using illustrations I know they are familiar with. I have found that they have learned many positive things from the game, including dealing honorably with people, the importance of a good reputation and leadership skills to name a few that come quickly to mind. [f, 37]

I like to think it enhances. I know I use it to try and teach lessons I cant seem to in non fantasy settings. Even when he is playing and I am not I tend to offer advice when I think it is appropriate. It is also easier in EQ to let him do the REALLY stupid stuff and hopefully learn from his mistakes. [m, 43]

But above all, many parents talked about how playing the game together enhanced their relationship with their child by taking them beyond the roles of parent and child:

Yes, playing EQ with my daughter has been very enjoyable, and I have learned more about my daughters personality as she treats me as a friend on EQ and not a parent. [f, 40]

I think it has enhanced our relationship, we both treat each other more like equals and partners in our private life. It is much easier to talk to her now and I have found her talking to me about much more of her life and ideas. [f, 40]

No but it has shown my child that I`m ok and has allowed us to bridge an age gap and we tend to talk more then otherwise would be possible. Believe it or not it has brought us closer together because we share a same interest [m, 35]

Experience, Growth, and Change

When asked whether they have changed or grown from playing the game, most respondents replied that EQ was "just a game" and that people don't learn anything from it:

No change. Simply play for entertainment and social value. [m, 30]

No, it hasn't really had any kind of impact on me. It's just a game. [m, 23]

This is just a video game to me. I don't analyze it to that extreme, only use it as an escape from the stresses of RL for awhile. [m, 27]

But not all players thought that EQ was "just a game". Some respondents found themselves interacting with people differently outside of EQ:

It didnt change my thinking, it did however change to a minor extent my acting in real life. I have found it easier to share and confront other people with my thoughts...whether this is due to EQ or just me growing emotionally I am not quite sure off though. A very positive change indeed [m, 30]

I believe I have matured in my interaction with other people. When I first began playing I was rather hot-headed and impatient. I've been playing over a year and I think I've become more understanding of other people and their points of view. [m, 19]

Erm, good question. I tend to put a lot more belief in real life experiences contributing to personal growth, but I don't see why a game can't help you grow in addition to RL. I've learned to be a bit more tolerant, I think. I used to get really upset at folks for doing something stupid and getting us all killed, for instance, but again... it's a game and EVERYONE makes mistakes. Mostly, it's reinforced a lot of things I knew already, but sometimes let slip by... like the fact that just because someone doesn't do something MY way doesn't mean it's the wrong way. ;) [f, 30]

Some players felt that they had grown as a person from playing EQ:

Yes, I have learned to deal with more varied personalities and have developed leadership qualities that I lacked before. [f, 33]

Sure have. There is no better confidence builder than keeping your group alive or helping a frustrated player regain his corpse. You may be a lowly cashier or a bored house wife but in Norrath you can be something more that you might never achieve in RL. [f, 33]

Yes. I think that it has given me a more big-picture type sense of the world. Things make sense when I associate them with other things, and I think about things differently now. [m, 14]

Several players commented on gaining a better understanding of group dynamics and leadership:

I think forming a group in EQ is one of the most powerful elements in the game and has shown me a lot about myself and others. Throw 6 strangers together each with different class strengths and weaknesses, all trying to accomplish a common goal together, and you learn a lot about people. I can see what happens when communcation doesn't happen and its helped me try to communicate with people more in real life. [m, 30]

Definatly, I have become more outgoing, more of a leader-oriented person In RL as opposed to the quiet person who contributed only when asked. [m, 18]

Yes - I've learned a bit more about teamwork, and how to execute it. Everyone has their place, and everyone works together for the good of the whole. [m, 14]

Many players felt that the biggest problem EQ had introduced was the amount of time it consumed:

Sometimes I play too much and forget to do things in real life or hold up my responsibilities. Other times I get burned out on EQ and I don't play very much. It goes back and forth. [m, 30]

It's been a bit of a time sink, but I've been able to work around it for the most part. The main victim of the time I spend on EQ has been other leisure activities such as other computer games and reading magazines. Sleep has occassionally been sacrificed, but never more than a couple of hours' worth at a time. [m, 23]

Yes, it causes problems, it sucks up all my free time! Hehe. :) [f, 21]

Several players even used the word "addiction" to describe their attachment to EQ:

Sometimes yes, It is very easy to get addicted and get your priorities out of whack with EQ. You would rather come home and play EQ than do what needs to be done. [f, 22]

EQ has deepened my probelms in life because Eq is an addiction.Once you start, and play for a while it is extremely difficult to sever the link to EQ.I find myself, every free minute of the day, playing EQ or looking at EQ websites. [m, 15]

Players who were in a romantic relationship often cited the strains EQ brought into the relationship:

Yeah -- my soon-to-be ex-wife has an extreme aversion to any kind of computer game. EQ (or my playing it) was just one more nail in the coffin of our union. [m, 40]

Sometimes EQ has made problems in my relationship with my fiance. I play mostly at night, when he is at work. But he gets upset when he gets home, and I play for another 4 hours or so, because "we just started this raid, and I just HAVE to be here for it". Eq is a game you just can't sit down and play for an hour. Once you get involved in something, it's hard to just log off. Sometimes I play to much, and I have had to regulate myself from spending too much time playing. [f, 21]

yes, it drew me into the cpu game more than my real life... i wanted to spend more time online than i did with my RL girlfriend [m, 27]

When asked whether they have ever had any emotionally moving experiences in EQ, many players talked about the altruism they had experienced in the game:

I remember one instance in particular when I had just got level 51 (the guy referenced knew this), our group had a bad pull and then I started getting hit hard– this guy took the monster off me, moved it away and died, allowing me and my other friend to

escape (evac). I was emotionally moved that he did this for me, If i remember correctly i think i even shed a tear it was so moving (seriously)-- I worked to be sure he got a Ressurection and I thanked him for his heroic deed! [m, 17]

I came across a Barbarian character who was struck down by a gnoll. He lay there bleeding about to die. Luckily I had bandages on me and knelt down and brought him back to life. This was a strange thing on a racewar server as I was playing a High-elf and we are considered enemies. He was very amazed and thanked me over and over. I felt very moved. [m, 30]

Maybe. I have had a friend once in a group sacrificie himself once (basically the whole group was in a bad situation, so he basically told everyone to run, while he taunted and got all the monsters to aggro on him, giving us time to get away). This was particularly poignant as I know my friend doesn't have but a few hours a week to play, and thus a death would be a loss of a weeks worth of playing time...[m, 29]

Some players talked about friendships that developed in EQ:

Yes, Im very close to several people on EQ and treat them as very good friends. When some of them have problems, they can talk to me and I take it seriously, as they will speak to me about real problems and not just the "game". [f, 22]

Yes! Several! Mostly finding out during times of feeling down over my RL that I am important to my close friends on EQ who have stood by me offering every kind of support imaginable!!! [f, 49]

Yes. When the Test server was deleted I lost the interstion with friends in game and the character I had. I didn't realize the ties I had to those pixels before. After that, I learned to play more for the moment, since it could end again at any time. Luckily, my friends came back. The pixels dno't really matter =([m, 28]

Other players described experiences of frustration and anguish:

If you mean total anguish as I LDd during a battle or got caught in an event as a newbie and got ripped apart eight successive times at my bind point by a 30th level necromancer, then sure. Otherwise, no. [m, 30]

Hmmm, if you count the time when I screamed at the computer screen when I went linkdead in the middle of an important fight, I guess that would be the most emotional I have ever gotten! ;) [f, 21]

When respondents were asked to comment on whether nothing pertaining to the real world can be learned from the game because it is all fake, most players argued passionately that this was not the case:

The game is fake of course. Were only looking at our computer screens and pixels. But the people playing it are real. With real feelings, emotions, and desires. The actions I do and things I say make a difference as people remember and form opinions about myself. Once a high level character cast a bunch of super buff spells on me and said "soandso said you were a really nice person." and I had never met her before. I thanked her and felt good. [m, 30]

I think that whenever you have the oportunity to interact with other people, you have the opportunity to learn something. Everyone has something to teach you, be it online or in person. Afterall, you learn from what someone writes in a book, and you don't meet with the person in the flesh. Why would online be any different? With as many people you interact with in EQ, how can you not atleast learn something? That I think is the reason I have played EQ, the people that I meet. [f, 21]

I think any time kids get into environments where they can "try out" personalities and interact in a social environment they learn. I think your ability to "learn" from EQ is a factor of your age and emotional maturity. The younger you are, the greater the chance of learning. [m, 37]

I think this is proposterous, Norrath is a world with real consequences such as being an outcast, and very realistic rewards like always being asked to group, it is very much lifelike. If you learn nothing else, you will probably learn soon enough how to get along with others, like it or not. [m, 16]

I think they are wrong, in every aspect. Are the people playing it fake? Hell no, and therefore everything you say and hear is real, they are saying it, and you are hearing it just like what would happen in RL. And sometimes it can be easier to say things online rather than in person. Many things can be learned about people through EQ. [m, 17]

What About … ?

Melee –vs- Magic

While about half (53.9%, N=1072) of EQ players enjoy the melee and magic system about equally, the magic system seems to be preferred over the melee system. Players who prefer the melee system in EQ are significantly younger (F[2,1072]=6.43, p=.001) than players who enjoy both (Tukey HSD, M_{melee}=23.7, M_{both}=26.3, p<.001).

Which do you enjoy more of in EQ?
N=1072
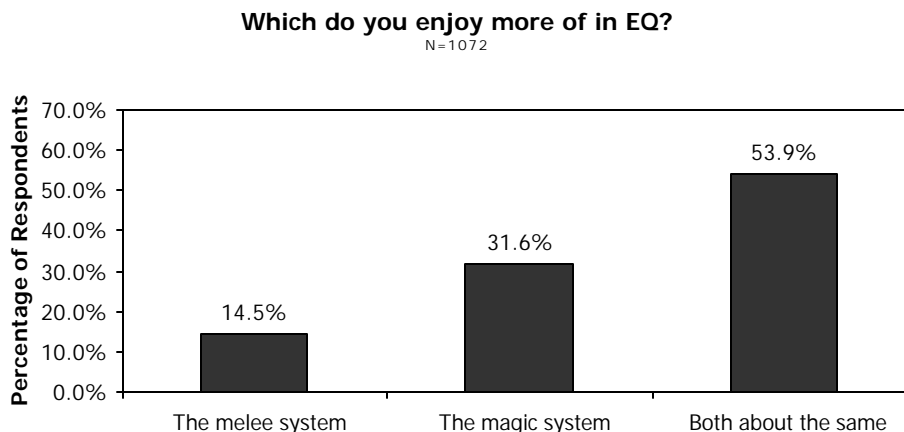
Does it bother you when your armor pieces don't match?

Slightly more than half of EQ players (53.1%, N=1092) are bothered when their armor pieces don't match. Female players are significantly more likely than male players to be bothered by armor pieces that don't match (T[1081]=-2.03, M_{male}(919)=3.23, M_{female}(164)=3.44, p=.04).

It bothers me when my armor pieces don't match with each other
N=1092
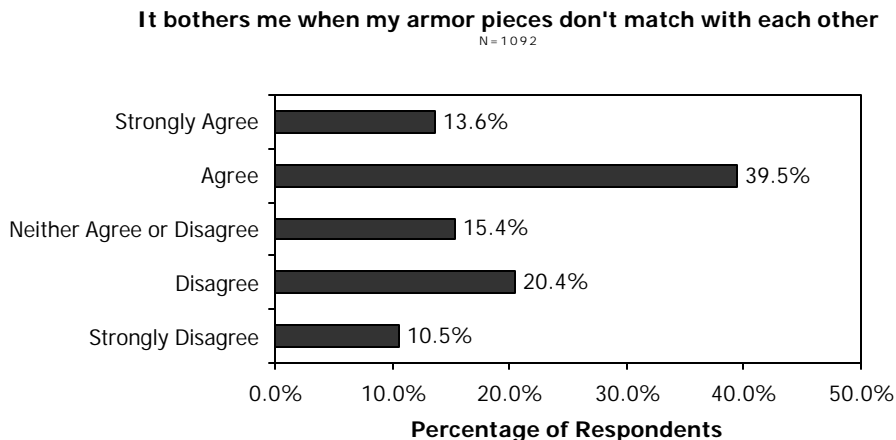
N	E	O	A	C

Players who score in the top quartile of Neuroticism are significantly more likely to be bothered by non-matching armor pieces than those players in the bottom quartile (T[418]=-2.97, M_{bottom}(207)=3.00, M_{top}(213)=3.34, p=.003). Players who score in the bottom quartile of Conscientiousness are significantly more likely to be bothered by non-matching armor pieces than those players in the top quartile (T[421]=3.21, M_{bottom}(206)=3.44, M_{op}(217)=3.05, p=.001). We see the same kind of significant difference in Agreeableness (T[406]=-2.97, M_{bottom}(185)=3.40, M_{top}(223)=3.10, p=.02).

EQ Fan-Faire

About 2.6% (N=2459) of EQ players have gone to EQ Fan-Faires. Female players are significantly more likely than male players to go to Fan-Faires ($\%_{male}$(2069)=2.1, $\%_{female}$(365)=5.5, p<.001). Players who have gone to Fan-Faires are significantly older than players who have never gone to Fan-Faires (T[2423]=-3.99, M_{yes}(63)=29.1, M_{no}(2362)=25.0, p<.001).

Buying items from E-Bay

About 9.7% (N=2461) of EQ players have bought EQ items from E-Bay. Male players are significantly more likely than female players to have bought items from E-Bay (%male(2071)=10.7, %female(365)=6.6%, p=.01). Players who have bought items from E-Bay are significantly older than those who have never bought items from E-Bay (T[2425]=-4.54, M_{yes}(245)=27.4, M_{no}(2182)=24.8, p<.001).

Do you usually smoke cigarettes when you play EQ?

About one-fifth of EQ players smoke cigarettes when they play EQ. Female players are significantly more likely than male players to smoke cigarettes when playing EQ ($\%_{male}$(868)=18.0, $\%_{female}$(133)=30.8, p<.001).

I usually smoke cigarettes when I play EQ
N male = 868, N female = 133
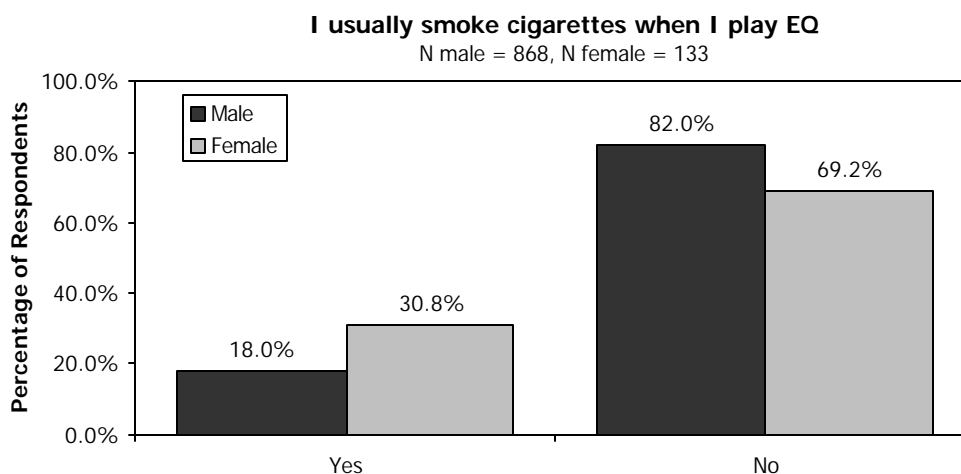
Players who usually smoke while playing EQ are significantly older than players who don't usually smoke when playing EQ (T[994]=2.63, M_{yes}(197)=27.4, M_{no}(799)=25.7, p=.009).

Do you usually drink alcohol when you play EQ?

About 8.8% (N=1005) of EQ players usually drink alcohol when they play EQ. There are no significant age or gender differences.

Upgrading computer for EQ

Almost half (46.6%, N=2461) of EQ players have upgraded their computers specifically for EQ. Female players are significantly more likely to have upgraded their computers for EQ when compared with male players ($\%_{male}$(2068)=44.9%, $\%_{female}$(368)=64.7, p<.001).

I upgraded my computer specifically for EQ

N male = 2068, N female = 368
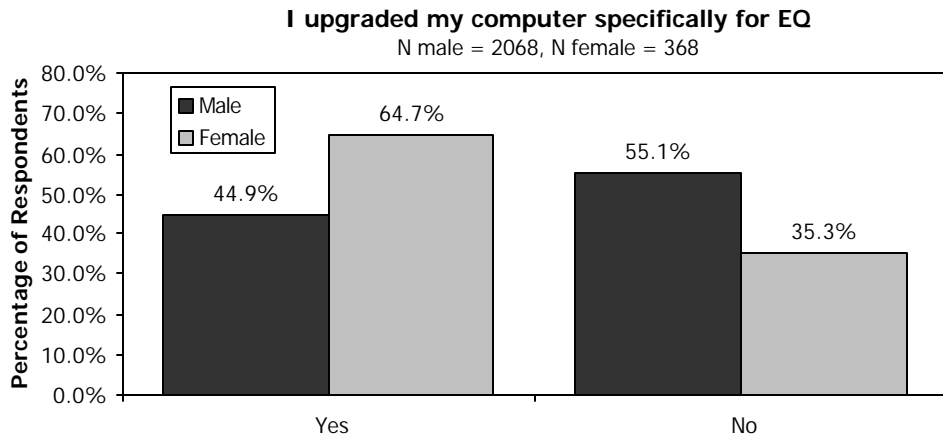
Upgrading Internet Connection for EQ

About a third (30.5%, N=2465) of EQ players have upgraded their internet connection specifically for EQ. Female players are significantly more likely than male players to have upgraded their internet connection for EQ (%male(2074)=29.9, %female(367)=38.4, p=.001).

I upgraded my internet connection specifically for EQ

N male = 2074, N female = 367
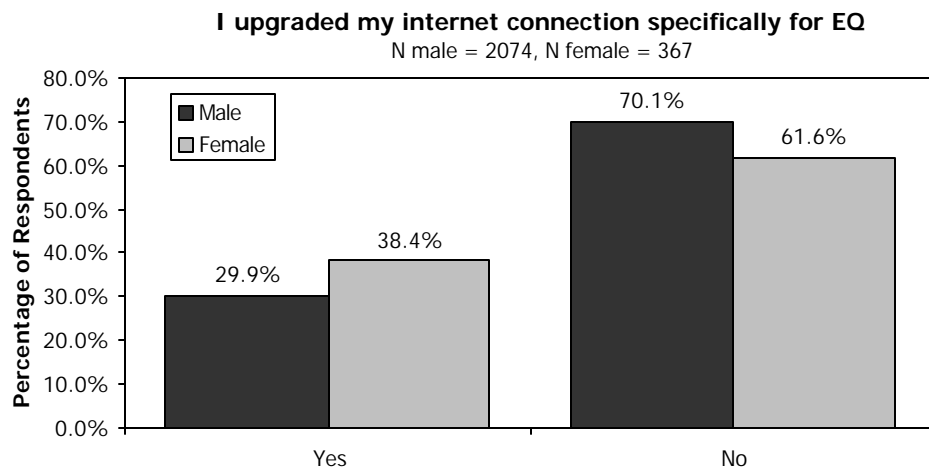
Do you dream about EQ?

A majority (68.1%, N=1098) of EQ players have dreamed about EQ. Female players are significantly more likely to dream about EQ than male players (%$_{male}$(924)=58.4, %$_{female}$(165)=80.6, p<.001).

Have you ever had dreams about or set in EQ? (by gender)

N male = 924, N female = 165

63
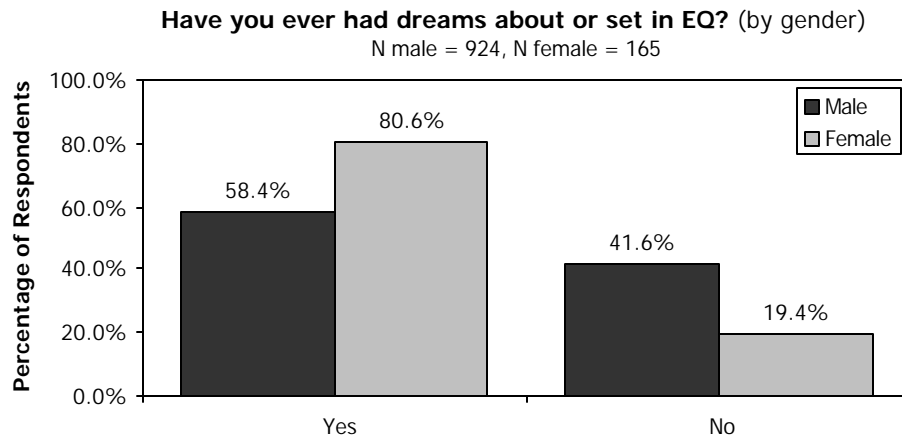
Players who dream about EQ score significantly higher on Neuroticism (T[929]=3.91, $M_{yes}(14.2)=14.2$, $M_{no}(341)=13.1$, p<.001) and Openness (T[929]=2.07, $M_{yes}(590)=19.9$, $M_{no}(341)=19.5$, p=.04) than those players who do not dream about EQ.

Most reported dreams usually had to do with:

1) **achievement - killing Innoruk, getting an epic weapon**

I found a bug to let me reach level 40. I was level 10 at the time. [m, 22]

Several times I've dreamed of finally finishing this quest armor quest. [m, 24]

2) **the ordinary – crossing a zone, killing basic mobs**

Yup, have had several. From what I remember, it was just the normal playing routine. [m, 15]

I have countless dreams set in EQ, just like my roommate, and all of my friends. I have no real details about any of them, other than they always involve me, as in me, not my character, wandering around an EverQuest-looking Earth, doing my usual activities while clearly playing EverQuest. [m, 21]

3) **anxiety – chased by a gang of gnolls, getting lost**

After my first time experiencing one of the massive trains in Guk, I dreamt that I was running thru my workplace with a hundred plus frogloks Stabbing me =) I made it to the break room with 4 hitpoints left! Close call [m, 18]

I had a dream that I fell through the ice on a frozen river in Everfrost. The undertow kept pulling me and I couldn't get out, then I woke up. [m, 24]

wish i could say i hadn't, it basically went like this   ...LOADING, PLEASE WAIT...(the nekkid kind...not the intentional kind) You have entered Lady Vox's Lair   Lady Vox slashes you for 324 points. Your spell fizzles! (rinse & repeat about 3 times) You have been slain by lady vox, you have lost ALL your levels. Welcome to level 1! [f, 24]

4) **sexual themes**

Not that I can remember. My dreams usually involve scantily clad women, so I guess a wood elf or two isn't out of the question. [m, 24]

Mmm woodelves [m, 25]

Looting Dilemma

"Your group is alpha looting till 3pp or FS with autosplit off (each member's turn lasts until they have accumulated either 3pp or they get a Fine Steel weapon). It is your turn and on your first loot, you get 3pp and 4gp. Do you say you're done, or continue to loot for a while?"

Almost all EQ players (94.1%, N=898) would say that they're turn is over, even though there is no way the other players would know how much money was looted. Players who would continue to loot are significantly younger than players who would say that they're turn is over (T[876]=3.55, M_{over}(829)=25.2, $M_{continue}$(49)=21.2, p<.001).

N	E	O	**A**	C

Players who would continue to loot score significantly lower on Agreeableness than those players who would say their turn was over (T[701]=3.51, M_{over}(660)=18.8, $M_{continue}$(43)=17.3, p<.001).

Healing Dilemma

"You are a healer and you are partnered with a tank. Because of a sudden spawn during a battle, the two of you lose control of the situation. Both of you are very low in health and you only have enough mana left for one heal. If you heal the tank, there is a 20% chance that the tank is able to finish the mobs. If you heal yourself, you have a 50% chance of zoning but the tank will die. Do you heal the tank or heal yourself?"

Almost all of EQ players (90.8%, N=899) would choose to heal the tank instead of themselves in this situation. Players who would heal themselves are significantly younger than players who would heal the tank (T[877]=2.45, M_{tank}(797)=25.3, M_{self}(82)=23.0, p=.01).

N	E	O	**A**	C

Players who would heal themselves score significantly lower on Agreeableness than those players who would heal the tank (T[701]=2.09, Mtank(642)=18.7, M_{self}(61)=18.0, p=.03).

Shield Dilemma

"At the end of a GM event, the GM hands you a no-drop shield with 16AC and +10 to your character's primary stat, but it has the word "WIMP" scrawled over it. Assuming your character is low-level and can use a shield, would you use the shield or not?"

The majority of EQ players (84.1%, N=899) would use this shield if they had it. Players who would use this shield are significantly older than players who would choose not to use this shield (T[877]=2.08, M_{yes}(740)=25.3, M_{no}(139)=23.8, p=.04).

| N	**E**	O	A	**C**

Players who would use the shield score significantly higher on Conscientiousness (T[701]=2.23, M_{yes}(591)=15.1, M_{no}(112)=14.4, p=.03) and Extraversion (T[701]=1.99, M_{yes}(591)=112, M_{no}(112)=14.3, p=.04) than those players who would not use the shield.

Addiction

Can't talk, playing EQ [m, 15]

Would you consider yourself addicted to EQ?

About two-thirds (62.1%, N=2328) of EQ players would consider themselves addicted to EQ. There are no significant age or gender differences.

Would you consider yourself addicted to EQ?
N =2328
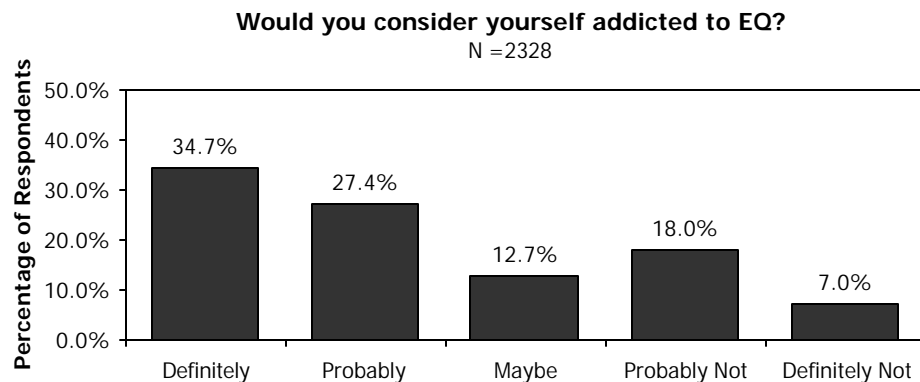
In Their Own Words:

How many hours is too many hours of EQ? And does that automatically equate to addiction? Many respondents tried to grapple with this issue:

I play EQ for 18 month now. And when I take all time of my characters and calculet the average I played 4h a day. This is mad. I tryed to stop playing EQ for some month, because I had to do a excam. But I found me everyday looking through the internet and reading EQ sites. I often find me thinking about EQ and daydreaming. I am addicted and know that, and I like it. [m, 24]

I like to play EQ alot. I play whenever I have free time. I don't watch tv during the week anymore but I don't miss it at all. I tape some shows on some nights that I watch on the weekend. I play at work as well during lunch. Basically if I don't have to do anything I will play EQ. I don't consider myself addicted but I can say it takes a lot of my time. I enjoy playing many of my characters but not as much as I do playing with the same people all the time and friends I have made in the game and guildmates. If I had to play without them I would just solo until I was able to play with them. [m, 28]

I do think i am an EQ addict, and yes I have tryd to stop. This was after i got my brother hookd on it tho, so even after i quit, he begd me to get back on to play with him. I held out for a long time, but I eventualy crackd, and got re-addicted. I think i like EQ, but i cant be shure. Its just to damn addicting to know if i actuialy enjoy the game. You might say, "well you would know if you like it or not" Well that might be true for some, but i just dont know. [m, 17]

On the other hand, there were clear-cut cases where the respondents themselves recognized that their game-play was seriously affecting them:

Yes, I am now officially a hermit. I had problems keeping in touch with old friends to begin with. Now its rare I see anyone other than the two people I live with. Both of which also play EQ, constantly. My girlfriend, and my roommate. Neither of them have jobs, and both of them play EQ 95% of their time awake. When I come home from work in the morning, my girl logs, and sits in my lap and watches me play. I dont have a phone plugged in anymore, I just check messages now and then. I dont answer my door. I barely talk to any friends or family. We have fun, I love EQ... but it -IS- without a doubt, an addiction. When your sitting there, knowing you have important things to do, but keep playing anyway... when your two closest loved ones cant pry themselves from "the game" to get themselves lives... when there is no food or clean clothes... etc... etc... [m, 22]

Yes, I consider myself addicted to EQ. I haven't tried quitting yet, but I will have to in a few months. I don't spend enough time with my 2 1/2 year old daughter. I'm a full-time mom, and my daughter watches TV all day while I play the game. In September, I will start homeschooling her, so I'll have to cut down on my EQ time. I'd like to stop now so I would have time to take her to the park during the week, or even let her play in the backyard, but leveling, getting new spells and new skills is all I think about. [f, 27]

Several respondents articulated some of the effects of withdrawal:

I recently had to spend two weeks in another country for my job. Because the latency back to the US was so horrible there, I couldn't play EQ (600ms and greater). A day didn't go by that I wasn't thinking about it - would my friends surpass me in levels, would I lose interest in the game from not playing (yes, I was actually worried about this). I made a point of browsing the message boards every day to see what Verant was up to, found myself feeling anger and delight in the opinions expressed by both sides. I am now a permanent part of this community. [m, 27]

I am addicted to EQ and I hate it and myself for it. When I play I sit down and play for a minimum of 12 hours at a time, and I inevitably feel guilty about it, thinking there a large number of things I should be doing instead, like reading or furthering my education or pursuing my career. But I can't seem to help myself, it draws me in every time. I have been out of work now for over a month and now find myself in a stressful, depressed state that it only quelled when I am playing EQ, because it's easy to forget about real world troubles and problems, but the problem is when you get back to the real world, problems and troubles have become bigger, and it's a bad, bad cycle. I've tried quitting seriously on several occassions, but I was shocked to find each time that the experience reminds of what I've heard quitting heroin is like. There are serious withdrawal pangs, anxiety, and a feeling of being lost and not quite knowing what next to do with yourself. I don't think this could possibly be the norm for most people, maybe I just have an addictive personality, although I've never been addicted to anything before in my life. [m, 26]

Many respondents gave reasons for why they felt the game was so addictive. One often-cited reason was that it allowed players to escape the real world:

I think anyone that plays more than 20 hours a week is addicted tho most would deny it. The sad truth is that in many ways EQ is better than RL. It is easier to succeed in EQ, I can be beautiful, fit and healthy in EQ - in real life I am chronicly ill and there isn't much fun or achievement to be had. EQ is more than just an opiate, and much more than just a game. In a very real sense EQ gives me an opportunity to feel free. [f, 36]

I continued to play because I was also unhappy with the circumstances in my real life and needed to "forget" about it for as long as I could. I was having financial troubles and marital problems as well. I could ignore my real life and escape into eq. This wasnt for the fun, it was a "need" that I felt to not deal with my life responsibly and eq was my chosen method of "druging" myself into blissful ignorance. [m, 33]

Yes, I do consider myself addicted to it. I think I am because I like hanging around with many people at a place and doing something fun. Since EQ is half social and half an RPG, that's the perfect enviroment for me. There's also no stress about real life relationships while in EQ since they aren't real life. I don't have to worry about that girl that I just bought a drink for and if she thinks I'm "cute", and I don't have to worry about that random guy trying to start a fight with my friend. In EQ, both situations can be just turned off; worries are gone, and I continue with the fun I was having before. [m, 22]

Other players talked about the friends and social obligation factor:

I am an EQ addict. I play every day, only taking a break when I get to a point where I have real life stress over something that happens in game. When I do take breaks, it's usually for only a day.   I worry about my game life as much as I worry about my real life. If I am late getting on, I feel like people will be disappointed with me.   As a guild leader, when conflicts arise people come to me to resolve them. People look to you to have events, help them get things, quest, etc. I have had people in my own guild leave because they didn't feel we gave them enough of our time or enough "phat lewt". I try to please everyone, but it is unrealistic to think you can be everywhere for everyone, keeping them all happy. It gets to be a heavy burden to bear, and sometimes I end up in tears out of frustration. I am an addict. Will I quit? No. Why? Because I love it. =) [f, 30]

I'm addicted to, so much as the interactioni between friends that I have meet in game. I look forward to going home after work and loging in to see haow every one is. Did they have good a good day at work. Did there baby get over the colic problem.   It's like a small town...only you get to choose who you want to be around. If I don't feel like being around a particular personality...I just play a different character. But on the whole I see these people as an extended family. Each one that leaves (and I've known several) and never returns hurts as much as loosing a "true" friend or loved one.   I have tried quiting...and just limiting my play. But when you progress in levels, and to group with verious people you MUST level, it makes it difficult to just "limit" your play time. I am currently looking at getting one character high enough to go on a Dragon/Plains raid. After that I am going to reconsider keeping my account open. [anon]

Other players attributed it to the constant presence of the "next best thing":

The game is set up to make you want the next best thing. "Oh look what that guy has! How do I get that?" The answer is always to spend more time online either getting higher level to go camp the item, or to just go camp the item (or slight   variation, camp the quest items that result in the new item).   But you are rewarded for playing more. Better items, more freedom on where you can go. [m, 21]

And players who do quit EQ may find themselves hooked into playing again:

Every few months I get really bored. Im either stuck in a nasty level and cant find something interesting to camp/kill for good xp. Or maybe if Ive found it consistently hard to find good groups. Sometimes its just cos Ive come across too many kids playing EQ who have no sense of fair play and treating people with respect and ruin my EQ experience. And I can only ignore 20 people at a time dammit! :-p So I take a break - cold turkey - and say I dont want to play EQ ever again. Of course I always seem to come back after a month or so. Usually when Im bored and have nothing better to do.   But of course thats usually all it takes...I get hooked back into the whole levelling and exp junkie cycle. [f, 27]

I had been playing EQ for about 2 months when I began to realize the amount of time I was spending away from reality and my obligations. I gradually weaned myself off EQ after another 2 months. I haven't played EQ regularly for a few months now. Although I have regained some control, I still feel serious urges to play now and again. EQ has a very distinct society that I found appealing. Everyone who played found something they liked alot and just kept doing it. Repetition and social interaction is what

addicted me to EQ. I would wager to say that I am still addicted even though I don't play for long stretches at a time. EQ is highly addictive and quitting entirely is something VERY difficult to do. After all, if you do quit... everything you worked so hard for (your stats, equipment, friends) is gone forever since characters are stored solely on the Verant servers. The only thing you can take with you is the stories. And those anecdotes will haunt you endlessly until you give in to the urge to re-immerse yourself in Norrath just one more time. [m, 27]

But players who have it under control put a different spin on things:

In a happy way, yes. :) It's true that I would feel a lot of pain if I had to quit EverQuest...but I think that far from being the "menace" that I've seen EQ addiction made into, it's actually a lot more healthy than (for example) people who come home in the evening and spend 4 or 5 hours watching television. In EverQuest, I interact with people, do creative things, think and strategize, and generally enjoy myself. I think it's not much different than other forms of recreation with friends and others. So no, I've never tried quitting. Why would I want to? I enjoy spending time playing EverQuest, and I don't see it as fundamentally unhealthy behavior. [f, 23]

EQ: The Virtual Skinner Box

Play it and find out... On second thought don't play it.   If you're involved in college you really wanna graduate. EQ will addict you so much you'll forget about work. I don't know why it is. I really HATE RPG's but EQ is just extremely fun. It's got a weird aura about it, all I can say. [m, 16]

Almost everyone who has taken an introductory psychology course in high school or college has heard of B.F. Skinner. Skinner is an important figure in Behaviorism, and developed a learning theory known as Operant Conditioning. Skinner claimed that the frequency of a given behavior is directly linked to whether it is rewarded or punished. If a behavior is rewarded, it is more likely to be repeated. If it is punished, it becomes suppressed. This deceptively simple and straight-forward theory may explain why EverQuest is so addictive.

The rewards cycle in EverQuest begins with instant gratifications. When you start a new character, everything you need to do is close by – finding the guildmaster; finding mobs to kill. The first few mobs you attack die in several swings and you make level 2 in about 5 kills. By the time you make level 3 half an hour later, you are more aware of the underlying skill points, the accumulation of money, and gain a desire to get better equipment. Gradually, it takes longer and longer to get to the next level. The simple tasks that you did to improve trade skills have become trivial, but the rewards you get - the blue skill points and the metal bits – drive you to perform tasks more elaborate than before because trivial tasks are no longer rewarded. The one-click reward disappears, and is gradually replaced by rewards that take more and more clicks to get. And suddenly, some of us find ourselves clicking away for hours in front of a forge or jewellery kit.

 This process of guiding an individual to perform more and more elaborate and complex tasks is known as shaping in Operant Conditioning. It is usually explained in textbooks in conjunction with Skinner Boxes. Skinner boxes are small glass or plexi-glass boxes equipped with a combination of levers, food pellets, and drinking tubes. Laboratory rats are placed into Skinner boxes and conditioned to perform elaborate tasks. At first, the rat is rewarded with a food pellet for facing the lever. Then it is rewarded if it gets closer to the lever. Eventually, the rat is shaped to press the lever. Once the rat learns that pressing the lever is rewarded, a food pellet does not need to be dropped every time and the rat will still continue pressing the lever. It is in the same way that EverQuest shapes players to pursue more and more elaborate blacksmithing or tailoring combinations. Moreover, EverQuest players continue to attempt elaborate combinations in the face of many costly failures.

There are several schedules of reinforcement that can be used in Operant Conditioning. The most basic is a fixed interval schedule, and the rat in the Skinner Box is rewarded every 5 minutes regardless of whether it presses the lever. Unsurprisingly, this method is not particularly effective. Another kind of reinforcement schedule is the fixed ratio schedule, and the rat is rewarded every time it presses the lever 5 times. This schedule is more effective than the fixed interval schedule. The most effective method is a random ratio schedule, and the rat is rewarded after it presses the lever a random number of times. Because the rat cannot predict precisely when it will be rewarded even though it knows it has to press the lever to get food, the rat presses the lever more consistently than in the other schedules.

A random ratio schedule is also the one that EverQuest uses. Both melee and trade skill points increase after a random number of attempts. You know you won't get skill points unless you practice the skill, but you don't know how many attempts it will take to get another skill point. Level increases also take a random number of kills. You know that you won't gain a level by standing around, but you don't know exactly how many mobs you need to kill. Because the time it takes to level can be estimated however, one might argue that level increments follow a fixed ratio rather than a random ratio schedule. It is the presence of experience penalties from dying that randomizes this estimation,

because it is hard to estimate deaths. The ability for certain classes to use effective strategies (druid quad-kiting for example) at certain levels also means that a higher level may be completed in less time than the level before it. Veteran players know that just because you can get a bubble of experience in half an hour today doesn't mean you can do it again tomorrow, because class demand and grouping conditions change even in the same zone from day to day.

A completely transparent experience points system would be a fixed ratio schedule because you have a very good grasp of how many more solo kills it takes to gain a level. Thus, if EverQuest exposed the underlying numerical experience points and told you how many points a mob gave you, and how much more experience you need to gain a level, it would be less effective as a reinforcement schedule. A system that can most effectively hint at progress without sacrificing this opacity maximizes the random ratio schedule, and this is why the recently implemented blue macro-view line in the experience bar enhances the schedule already in place. This is particularly true for mid-level players who would get frustrated by the normal experience bar that moved too slowly, and thus made them feel that progress was not being made.

The presence of multi-layered and overlapping goals in the game allow players to pursue multiple rewards concurrently. You need more experience to gain levels so you can kill bigger creatures. Along the way, you need more money to buy better equipment. You may want to develop trade skills, complete quests, travel across Norrath, or camp a rare spawn. Most of the time, you'll be doing several of these at the same time. In fact, the game forces you to. You can't keep up with mobs if you level but don't buy new gear. You can't continue blacksmithing if you run out of money. What this means is that you're always close to a goal - a reward. You are seldom far away from all possible rewards.

But something more intensely provoking has happened in EverQuest which makes it addictive. Another frequently encountered figure in introductory psychology textbooks is Maslow, known for his proposed hierarchy of needs. Maslow sees human needs in a pyramid scheme. At the bottom are basic hunger and thirst needs. Then follows security. At the top of the pyramid are aesthetic needs and personal achievements, which would only be possible on a strong foundation of sated hunger and security needs. Thus, even though personal achievements are more rewarding than filling an empty stomach, these achievements are only possible once you've filled your stomach. But EverQuest makes it possible for Joes and Janes to become heroes. EverQuest makes it so that you can slay Vox in a guild raid on an empty stomach. What happens when people can feel achievement through continuous mouse-clicking? What happens when these achievements are more rewarding than "real life" achievements? And what if it's easier to click the mouse than to cook dinner?

One important tenet of Operant Conditioning is that behaviors are not inherently rewarding - they are made rewarding through reinforcement. It is the shaping process in EverQuest that makes the in-game "achievements" rewarding. It is the shaping process that make "achievements" achievements. People who don't play EQ don't see the appeal in clicking "COMBINE" in front of a forge for hours. They don't see why players would camp Quillmane or ice cougars for hours, even days, for an item that usually doesn't drop. To outsiders, the time players spend playing the game is mind-boggling. But it's hard for those of us inside the construct to realize this because the game has conditioned us to pursue these rewards.

Many things set EverQuest apart from other available computer games. Unlike other RPG's, there is no story-line or super-ordinate goal. In fact, there really isn't even any kind of plot, which allows the player to feel in control. Games like Diablo II give constant instant gratification, and do not gradually take more and more time to reach rewards. Game-play at level 25 in Diablo feels just like game-play at level 10, whereas that is not the case in EverQuest. No one would play Diablo if you needed to camp a mob that only sometimes dropped an item. In fact, no one would play Diablo if you had to wait for a mob to spawn. But what sets EverQuest apart is that it is multi-layered and

complicated in a way that few other games are. Everything from trade skills to faction, from mobs to their loot, from zones to planes, is complex and well-textured. Finally, it is different because it is massively multi-player, but while most multiplayer games are completely destructive, EverQuest has a decidedly constructive and cooperative tone to it. There is no blood in the game. No disemboweled intestines splatter on your screen. Instead, players often find themselves chatting while waiting for a mob to spawn. The ranger may be fletching as he recounts a particularly close battle. The warrior chugs some Dwarven Ale. There may be some emotes with playful, sexual overtones. In contrast with Quake or Diablo, this scene feels awfully relaxed and idyllic.

The massively-multiplayer nature of the game takes the virtual construct one step beyond just an elaborate Skinner Box. The problem with many people is that you can't have one box tailored to all of their reinforcement needs. But having them all in their separate Skinner Boxes is not interesting. The internet solves this problem by allowing individually tailored Skinner Boxes interact with others. And in this way, EverQuest has created a system of inter-connected Skinner Boxes, a Skinner Network even, where each Skinner Box is tailored to its host's needs and reinforcement schedule, and where individuals can interact with each other without sacrificing the integrity of their own construct. It is like the Matrix where everyone is isolated in their own nutrient vat, but where they can interact in a digitally-constructed world.

Click … click … click … mad typing …. Click .. click .. Click .. click … click … mad typing …

Appendix I: The Big-5 Personality Factors

The Big-5 factors were developed by Costa and McCrae[4]. An inventory of 25 items was drawn from a larger set developed by Lewis Goldberg[5].

Neuroticism (N)	
High Neuroticism	Low Neuroticism
Someone with high neuroticism is easily affected by the surrounding atmosphere. They get worried easily, are quick to anger, and easily discouraged. They often feel uneasy and embarrassed. They have difficulty resisting temptations and coping with stress.	People with low neuroticism have very stable moods. They often appear calm and relaxed. They are able to cope with stress around them and thus it takes more to discourage and embarrass them. They are composed and are able to handle stressful situations without anxiety.

Extraversion (E)	
High Extraversion	Low Extraversion
Individuals who score high on Extraversion are affectionate, friendly and intimate. They are gregarious and prefer company. They tend to be assertive and drift towards leadership positions. Craving excitement and thrills, they work and play at a fast pace. They usually have cheerful, optimistic outlooks on life in general.	Individuals who score low on Extraversion are reserved and formal. They prefer to be alone and seldom seek out company. They tend to stay in the background and perform their activities at a more leisurely pace. They have a low need for thrills and have a less exuberant attitude in general than extraverts do.

Openness (O)	
High Openness	Low Openness
People with high openness are imaginative and daydream a lot. They appreciate art and beauty and place value on emotions. They prefer variety in their lives and enjoy trying new things out. They have a broad intellectual curiosity and seem to be able to talk knowledgeably about many different things. They are liberal and open to re-examining their own values.	People with low openness focus on the here and now. They find speculative talk a waste of time. They are uninterested in artistic endeavors and discount the value of emotions. They prefer familiar, routine tasks and life styles. They have a narrow intellectual focus and are very conservative and dogmatic about their own views and values.

Agreeableness (A)	
High Agreeableness	Low Agreeableness
Individuals high in this scale see others as honest and well-intentioned. Thus they are often straight forward and frank with others, and are willing to help and trust in them. If placed in a conflict, they usually defer under a higher authority. They are humble, sometimes self-effacing, and are usually tender-minded and easily moved.	Individuals low on this scale have a cynical and skeptical outlook on life. They find it hard to trust others and often appear guarded and reluctant to get involved. They are aggressive and competitive, especially when placed under conflict. They often feel superior to others, and are hard-headed and rational.

[4] Costa, P.T., McCrae, R.R. (1992). Four Ways Five Factors are Basic, Personality and Individual Differences, 13, pp. 653-665. Oxford, England.
[5] Goldberg, L. Development of Five-Factor Domain Scales. Online: http://ipip.ori.org/ipip/memo.htm

Conscientiousness (C)	
High Conscientiousness	Low Conscientiousness
People with high conscientiousness feel capable and effective. They are well-organized, neat and tidy. Governed by conscience and honor, they are driven to achieve success. They focus on completing tasks and think carefully before acting.	Individuals low in this scale often feel unprepared. They are unorganized and unmethodical in performing tasks. They are casual about obligations and have a low need for achievement. They procrastinate frequently and are easily distracted. They are spontaneous and hasty in tasks.

Appendix II: List of Questionnaires Used and Respective Links

The study consisted of 4 phases over a 5-month period from September 2000 to February 2001. All links are under the http://www.nickyee.com/eqt/ directory.

Name of Form	Phase	Brief Description	Link
Questionnaire: General Set 1	1	General issues: Meta-Game, Meta-Character, In-game dynamics	ques1.html
Personality Inventory: Set 1	1	Big-5 and MBTI scales	per.inv1.html
Survey: Relationships and Love	1	Role-playing romantic relationships in EQ	s.relate.html
Survey: Growth and Experience	1	Whether the respondent has learned anything about himself or in general from playing EQ	s.grow.html
Questionnaire: General Set 2	2	General issues: Demographics, Meta-Game, Relationships	ques2.html
Questionnaire: Gaming Style	2	In-game preferences and behavior	ques.style.html
Personality Inventory: Set 2	2	Locus of control	per.inv2.html
Flash Experiment: Set 1	2	Trust in EQ-vs-chatroom, and gender-bending	experiment.html
Questionnaire: General Set 3	3	General issues: Demographics, Meta-Game, Dilemmas	ques3.html
Survey: Gender-Bending	3	On why players choose to gender-bend and what the experience was like	s.gendbend.html
Survey: Gaming with Parent/Child	3	How is it like to play EQ with a parent or child?	s.parent.html
Survey: Gaming with Romantic Partner	3	How is it like to play EQ with a romantic partner?	s.spouse.html
Flash Experiment: Set 2	3	Character visual appeal, altruism	experiment2.html
Questionnaire: General Set 4	4	General Issues: Meta-Game, In-game dynamics	ques4.html
Questionnaire: Gaming Style (revised)	4	Revised version of same used in Phase 2	ques.style2.html
Questionnaire: Appeal	4	On what aspects of the game are appealing or unappealing	ques.appeal.html
Questionnaire: Sentence Completion	4	Free-form sentence completion	ques.sentcomp.html
Survey: Stories	4	Eliciting more elaborate accounts	s.stories.html
Flash Experiment: Set 3	4	Character choice, pilot for color	experiment3.html
Questionnaire: Demographics	5	Both real-life and in-game demographics	ques.demo.html
Questionnaire: Addiction	5	An attempt to understand factors and effects of EQ addiction	ques.addict.html
Questionnaire: Morals and Etiquette	5	What social codes exist in EQ?	ques.morals.html
Questionnaire: Elements of Appeal	5	Understanding appeal of different themes and elements in computer games	ques.elements.html

Appendix III: Other Related Studies Available

Through The Looking Glass (Fall, 1999)
http://www.nickyee.com/rpg/home.html

An online study exploring the interaction of player and character identity. Why do some people tend to create characters similar to themselves, while others seem to create characters wildly different from who they are in real life? Are characters idealized versions of the players who play them? And how does personality influence this interaction between player and character identity?

Journey into EverQuest (Spring, 2000)
http://www.nickyee.com/everquest/start.html

A qualitative online study of EverQuest that tries to map out the many different aspects of the game through free-response answers from EQ players. Includes sections on: appeal of the game, character creation, in-game dynamics, gender dynamics, relationships, and comparison with traditional RPG's. This study forms the foundation for the current ongoing study.

Alice in the Matrix (Summer, 2000)
http://www.nickyee.com/appeal/start.html

An online study that tries to explore connections between personality and attraction to particular game genres. Are there personality traits that distinguish FPS gamers from TBS gamers? Can we find support for the media portrayal of FPS gamers to be reclusive and neurotic? Read companion essay at: http://www.nickyee.com/ponder/redpixels.html.