



Gamer Over – Continue?

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GAMER OVER

...continue?

Is the identity of “gamer” salvageable? Or should we flush the whole thing down the toilet?

Okay, the last couple of weeks have been kinda cataclysmic and an interesting development took place: The hostility in the name of video games escalated that much, that people declare the identity “gamer” – with all its negative connotations – to be kinda over.

Many people have written great opinion pieces about this, such as [Leigh Alexander did on Gamasutra](#). Check it out, it's not only well written but also includes links to some of the most relevant events of the last weeks. People are just so tired and exhausted of all the exclusionary shit going on that they just want to flush the whole thing. Tear it all down. [The tree house is boarded up, like Dan Golding phrased it](#).

"But can't we agree that hostile gamerbros are rotten apples and not what most gamers are?" – Tell that to the industry!

It's easy to look at the hostile people in our community and dismiss them as an insignificant group – just a vocal minority – and then go on as if we don't have a cultural problem. Assholes are everywhere, right? But this is not an insignificant group and they are not alone. They have the video game industry on their side.

[Creating and maintaining a social anxiety with one hand to then sell them comfort with the other is standard in advertising and the gaming biz is no different](#). **The hard truth: For decades now, the gaming industry sells validation to scared and confused white men/boys and calls them "gamers"!**

The mainstream gaming industry pushes the idea, that there is such a thing as a "real gamer" and that those who aren't are a problem and/or worthless beings, so they can sell you stuff to maintain your status as a "real gamer". Thanks to the stern focus on white heterosexual males as a target group, this anxiety intersects with anxieties about masculinity and whiteness.

Yo, yo, yo! Sega does what nintendon't – don't buy the wrong console! Buy our shit – don't be a loser! Buy Dead Space 2 – your mom hates it! Buy our shit – because we love you even if your girlfriend doesn't understand. Buy our shit, be hardcore! Your mom plays casual games – not real games! Your sister plays twine games – not real games! Buy our shit – join the PC master race! Our girls undress with the push of a button, oh and here is a cool black friend! Kill, rule and sometimes almost have sex off camera! Do you have what it takes or are you a faggot? Your mom hates what you do, Anita Sarkeesian is your mom! Noobs everywhere! Fake geek girls! Buy our shit – be real! Don't be a loser! Don't be a girl! Don't be a loser!

Mainstream games industry is heavily invested in making "gamers" an exclusive club, so that people pay to get in and stay.

so, if you identify as a gamer and think it's a wonderful thing to be a gamer. If you welcome everybody to join, as devs, as players, as writers and think that each person's personal approach to gaming makes it a richer place — first thank you — but also be active and start claiming the term “gamer” from those who corrupt it.

...and that is NOT the critics. The critics are reacting to the reality of “gamers” as a white straight male dominated ingroup with anxieties and fears and a villain — clearly defined by the games industry — to lash out against. This is real. It's not a matter of perspective.

It's the industry. It's a billion dollar propaganda machine that breeds and maintains “gamers” as insecure and angry white men.

Be a critic.

Support a critic and share their work.

Support alternative game projects.

Heck, start alternative game projects.

Read criticism and grow.

Acquire media literacy.

Call out problematic advertising.

Be vocal on message boards and networks.

The time to ask for everybody to chill out has long passed.

Fight for what gamer means to you.

Thank you.

One Comment



09/17/2014 at 5:00 pm

**Kayleigh
Herbertson**

Until I was 17 I wasn't allowed games. I bought myself a slimline PS2 with my savings without telling my parents and it was a true awakening. But I'll never be a “real gamer” to many people. I got in too late. I've never played 2D. I'm a woman. I've not played Ocarina of Time/ Super Mario 64/ Contra/ Metal Gear Solid. I'm suddenly tired of being told I need to be the change I want via making games myself, not just buying them. If I don't, I don't deserve an opinion. More proving myself again.

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