

## When Will We Stop Fueling The Attacks On Women?

🕒 08/19/2014

📌 gaming feminism

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Warning! This is a strong rant by an upset person: me. If you are looking for diplomatic problem solving, you won't find it here today. Go somewhere else for that, thanks. This article is a dressing-down, not a conversation starter.

So, normally with rants like these I would start by presenting the recent bone of contention first. I would explain what drove me to write this commentary today. What specifically ticked me off?

But I'm just so tired – so so tired – writing up these instances of video game

culture treating women like shit. There is nothing specific about what drove me to hack into the keyboard today. It's far too normal, too expected, too everyday to hold this up like a special event. I mean, don't get me wrong, what happened today is harmful and ugly and asinine and someone was the target of just pure game culture driven vile... .. but it was nothing special. The system is broken and it's time to finally stop ignoring that shit.

## **For real now. The compartmentalisation needs to stop.**

The game playing public is filled with abusive men. Yes, men! I said it. It's a gendered problem. And when I say abusive I mean men constantly uttering micro aggressions towards the women in reach up to men publishing private phone numbers of women online, hacking their social media profile, publishing naked photographs and literally harassing women in their homes.

These are not just the illusive dudebros and 13-year-old little shits everyone loves to put the blame on. No these are nerds as well, the programmers, the fantasy role play gamers, the sci-fi geeks and retro-gamers... And the nerds are actually the worst kind, because they feel validated in what they do. They are inspired to organize and to attack and to harass – relentlessly, systematically – because they think that they are doing a service to video games.

They think they are doing important work to protect video games from censors, to clean video games from corrupt individuals, they keep bad games out, they keep games fun and relevant. ...and for some reason, this protection and saving and cleaning let's them mainly hunt women and keep women out and punish them if they are at risk of having any sort of relevance in the games culture. Or they do it because they think they got here first and what they do has been done forever, nobody complained until now, so why change? If you don't like it, go away, woman!

**Where do they get this feeling of validity from? How come they feel like they are the arbiters of games? Who tells them that?**

Game devs and publishers do.

Game press and media does.

Game events do.

**Basically every institution in mainstream games – from AAA publishers, to commercial indies, to magazines – fails**

# women miserably and repeatedly.

When a game dev or publisher again and again defaults to providing escapist power fantasies in which men rule by force and women are objects, then they foster a community of men, who enjoy feeling like they are in charge and who enjoy feeling like women are their property.

And if game devs or publishers simply refuse to be diverse with their protagonists, their audience won't be diverse as well, nothing to diversify and break up that male entitlement community. They will also rob women of the stories, representation and role models they deserve and will completely miss out on dealing with the prevalent stereotypes about women, which makes the male entitlement audience feel so superior.

When a game dev or publisher creates games and advertises those games with a mainly male target demographic in mind, then they confirm the idea that the gaming world is made for men, like they own the place. And women then are an oddity, a guest at best, guests which have to behave like the owner of the place demands or get out. Same goes for console manufacturers and platform providers.

When game conventions don't implement proper harassment policies or take care of security or ban booth babes, their conventions become a safe space for male entitlement gamers and hostile territory for women, who will be sexualized, objectified, groped and harassed.

When game conventions don't work hard enough to book relatively equal numbers of male or female speakers for panels and talk, their conventions become a male dominated space in which women then are an oddity, a guest at best.

If news outlets (print, web magazines, tv shows) just uncritically relay the male entitlement images and messages of publishers through advertising, press releases and so called reporting, then they validate that male entitlement and create an image of games as a naturally male dominated space. The same goes if they uncritically cover gaming conventions where male entitlement is maintained.

There is no branch in gaming in which the safety and access of women is a priority above mutually maintaining the financially necessary relevance and appeal to male entitlement gamers.

**But that's just how the market works, right?**

I'm inclined to agree, yes.

It's financially risky to suddenly ignore previously established best practices and to aim for less explored target audiences like women or like men who like to experience female centric content. Even though the established target audience is a horde of hostile orcs basically.

It's public harakiri to refuse to host big publishers in your gaming convention and to implement policies which will "politicise" your entertainment convention. Even though hostile orcs.

It's financially insane to refuse to show ads from big publishers and a serious decline in traffic and relevance to not cover everything big that happen on the market or on conventions. Even though hostile orcs.

I get that. We do not need personal hostility towards women to keep a system going that IS hostile towards women. The financial incentives are more than enough to ensure that. But you know what? When financial incentives are more important than ethics, that's what corruption is.

Our self-delusion that we think we respect women or view them equally to men has brought us nowhere! What we feel about women is almost besides the point now, since what we do is fucking them over... again and again and again. Our intentions are worthless when we keep working within a corrupt system.

**How can anybody claim to be respectful towards women, to want them to be able to participate and at the same time not be utterly disgusted by how gaming as a culture and market works right now?**

This system needs to change. Diversity in target groups and subsequently in the created games and media needs to happen now, on a grand scale, boldly. Community policies need to be implemented and hiring practices need to be adjusted so that the male entitlement gamer nerd crowd feels in their soul that their days are over and that they can be thankful to have a seat at the table at all. Coverage on public events and in media outlets about projects which are not inclusive towards women needs to dry up instantly, forcing regressive messages into meaninglessness.

...and if the system – the games market – does not allow us to behave like fucking ethical human beings and get our shit together, then this system is corrupt and broken. Then it needs to be burned to the ground and rebuild from that ground up. I know that my demand is not realistic, I don't care. Start fixing this mess.

Rant over.

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## 10 Comments



BeepingStepper

08/20/2014 at 9:58 am

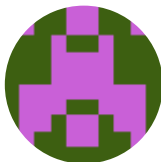
Can you please elaborate on or point to what happened yesterday?  
I'm following your postings concerning this problem for quite some time now, still some context would help me to understand better.



Mizahnyx

08/20/2014 at 11:30 pm

The ex of a woman developer orchestrated a harassment campaign towards her out of vengeful spite, aided by people in 4chan and similar places.



★ admin

08/21/2014 at 12:02 am

Well, it's more complicated and much more related to games culture.

The theme of the harassment campaign is that the female developer in question has allegedly slept her way into getting press coverage for her game. She also is an outspoken feminist.

So all the themes of slut shaming, fake geek, ruining games, women get everything for free, game was never worth anything in the first place... etc. apply.



Mizahnyx

08/21/2014 at 3:18 pm

I understand fully that 'this is not about me' that someone is suffering orders of magnitude more than any complain I can make on this subject.

However, when I look at my twitter, the comments I get are 'gamers are manchildren' 'gamers are the worst' 'gaming culture is rotten' 'gamers are misogynists'. Those aren't the voices I want to hear, for sanity reasons. I love gaming, and that won't change, and sometimes I will play games problematic to you feminists, and that won't change either.

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★ admin

08/21/2014 at 6:04 pm

These voices are a response to gaming culture.

Their (and also mine) response is based on observation, personal experience and analysis.

The response is well deserved.

If you want that response to change, you need to help change gaming culture and NOT ask the people responding to change their response.

If you don't identify with misogyny, help to keep it from defining your culture.

If you don'T identify with a rotten gamer culture, help to make gamer culture less rotten.

The complaints about the problem are not the problem, the problem is the problem.

Change gaming, don't ask for silence.

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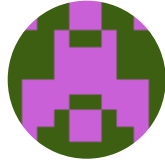


Mizahnyx

08/21/2014 at 11:15 pm

I don't want any of you to silence or tone down at all. I can only talk about the effect that those messages have on me as a bystander. I don't always have the fortitude to endure them. I will probably stop following too many activists.

Maybe, just maybe you should ally with and call out the pockets of gamers that aren't like those harassing her, that only want to have fun without ruining anyone's day. They could not be feminists, but they surely can see that harassment is totally wrong.



★ admin

08/21/2014 at 11:20 pm

Well, I apologize for reprimanding you like that.

Voicing frustration with comments – like you did – is easily read as calling for those comments to stop. So, I hope you understand my confusion and how you could prevent that messaging in the future, as I understand to ask next time before shooting.

Thanks for clearing that up and yes I can imagine that the whole thing can be quite problematic for self-identified gamers – including the criticism. It's not something I do for fun or to feel good about myself. I care, but I realize that I'm often asking for tough things.

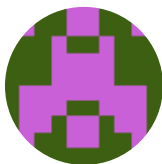
Take care.



solun

08/22/2014 at 12:01 am

You are forgetting feminists who are critical of games are avid gamers too. I complain about the game industry and the toxic gaming culture because it's a medium I love. I deal with sexist/racist feedback on games from middle aged men at work, then go home to play games I love only to face gross slurs thrown at my friends and I, or see game franchises I'm passionate about shit on their female fans. I love gaming, and that won't change. And I deserve a place in gaming just as much as you.



★ admin

08/22/2014 at 12:02 am

BAM! THIS!



08/20/2014 at 12:24 am

I will call out on harassment and never ever expose someone just because I disagree

Mizahnyx

with her. (I disagree with you in many points, to start). I know what the worst sociopaths online are capable of and the damage they have done to valuable women in the industry. But If I have the chance, I will develop twitch, action games, because that is what I like. Sorry not sorry.

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