

Lesson 5 – Losing a grip on reality

Read Source 5 (Pages 12-13) then do the following activities:

1. Match the word to the definition.

A	Obsessed	1	Massively Multiplayer Online Role Play Game
B	Fanatic	2	a person with an extreme and uncritical enthusiasm or zeal, as in religion or politics.
C	MMORPG	3	Although, even if
D	Signifies	4	Addicted – cannot think of anything else
E	IRL	5	In the style of the Middle ages
F	Mass-market product	6	Fantasy characters found in video games
G	Albeit		A product produce in large amounts
H	Medieval		Like the characters in one of Tolkeins novels e.g. The Hobbit or The Lord of the Rings
I	Tolkien-esque		Shows
J	Druids, paladins, orcs		In real life

Write your answers here:

A		G	
B		H	
C		I	
D		J	
E			
F			

Now answer the following as fully as possible:

1. What do you think actually killed 'Snowly' the Chinese online gaming fanatic?
2. Do you think it was appropriate that her fellow gamers staged an on-line funeral?
3. Why do you think that MMORPG players have needed to come up with the shorthand 'IRL'?
4. What type of person do you usually think of as playing video games? Children, teenagers, middle age people, old people?

5. Do you feel differently about a young person being obsessed by video games than say a 30 or 40 year old man or woman? – explain.
6. Why do you think the World of Warcraft game creators have made it so that there is no ending to the game?
7. Who benefits most from this?
8. What kinds of people are likely to be able to spend 40 hours a week playing these games?
9. How would this affect a person's school life or job?
10. Do you think it is possible to play these types of games without becoming obsessed?
11. What kinds of people are likely to be more susceptible to obsession?
12. Explain how it may affect relationships?

Extra Resources

You Tube clips

<http://youtu.be/TN-X4JivB94> National geographic World Cyber games Part 1 (10 min clip – are 4 more parts if needed but one is probably enough)

<http://youtu.be/T-x-XXtwpgk> World of Warcraft Introduction (3 mins)

Newspaper articles

http://www.oddee.com/item_96657.aspx - 10 most bizarre gaming incidents

<http://news.softpedia.com/news/Two-Fanatic-World-of-Warcraft-Gamers-Have-Died-Because-Of-WoW-11821.shtml> article

10 Most Bizarre Gaming Incidents

Published on 5/1/2009 under [Fun Tech](#) - by Gracie Murano - 222,143 views

Girl died playing World of Warcraft and got online funeral

A young Chinese girl nicknamed "[Snowly](#)" [died](#) after playing the online game "World of Warcraft" for several continuous days during a national day [holiday](#). Snowly's friends, who share the same game community, said that she was always connected to the Internet.

Several days before Snowly's death, the girl was said to be preparing for a relatively difficult part of the game and had very little rest. She told her friends that she felt very tired. A big online funeral was held for Snowly one week after her death. The Chinese government is now seeking to instate a gaming curfew, limiting sessions to three hours at a time.

Gang kidnaps Gunbound MMO High Score Holder to steal Account

In July 2007, a Brazilian gang called "La Firma" [kidnapped the top score holder](#) in the licensed MMO, Gunbound in order to get his account and sell it, according to Xinhua.

Gunbound is a very popular light combat/competitive MMO developed by Softnyx from Korea. The game does not allow the exchange of user accounts, but they are traded on the blackmarket for up to \$2,700. Apparently, the group tried to steal the unnamed top players account on a number of occasions (perhaps by stealing his password). They successfully trapped the player by using a girl who flirted with him online and enticed him to meet her in an internet cafe in Sao Paulo. She didn't show up, instead, a guy with a gun did and kidnapped the player and forced him to disclose his account information. The gang then offered the account on a website for \$8,000. Brazilian Police arrested the gang later.

Boy saves his sister from a moose attack with skills learned from World of Warcraft

A 12 year-old Norwegian [boy saved his sister](#) and himself from a moose attack using skills he picked up in the online role playing game 'World of Warcraft.' Hans Jurgen Olsen and his sister got into a spot of trouble when they encroached on the territory of one of these antlered cold weather staples (otherwise known as a moose). When the beast went on the offensive, Hans knew the first thing he had to do was taunt it so that it would leave his sister alone and she could run to safety. "Taunting" is a move one uses in World of Warcraft to get monsters off of the less-well-armored team members.

Once he was a target, Hans remember another skill he'd picked up at level 30 in 'World of Warcraft' -- he feigned death. The moose lost interest in the inanimate Hans and wandered off into the woods. When he was safely alone Hans ran back home to share his tale of video game-inspired survival.

Player of Legends of Mir 3 stabs fellow gamer to death

In March 2005, a [Chinese man](#) was stabbed to death in a row over a sword in online game Legends of Mir 3. Shanghai gamer Qiu Chengwei killed player Zhu Caoyuan when he discovered he had sold a "[dragon](#) sabre" he had been loaned. Mr Chengwei only got the powerful virtual weapon shortly before it was sold for 7,200 yuan (£460). Before the attack Mr Chengwei told the police about the theft but had no response since the police said the weapon was not real property. The online gamer has been given a suspended death sentence for his crime.

Dutch teen steals nearly \$6,000 worth of virtual furniture

A 17-year-old was pinched for burglary in the Netherlands after walking off with \$5,900 worth of virtual furniture from Habbo Hotel. Habbo, which attracts more than 6 million users in over 30 countries each month, is comparable to Second Life in that people use the service to create a virtual likeness to inhabit an online world. A lot of real money changes hands in Habbo in order to purchase virtual goods used by people to personalize their online experience. That real money involved is what got the police interested in the theft.

Apparently jealous of other patrons' decor, the suspect swiped their keys, stole the furnishings and stashed them in his own room and the suites held by five accomplices. The virtual thief methods were a little nefarious: he lured Habbo Hotel users into giving up their passwords by creating fake Habbo sites. He was charged with burglary and hacking.

Woman Offers Sex for 'Warcraft' Gold

In an attempt to make her character stronger in the online game of World of Warcraft, a woman prostituted herself. Needing 5000 gold to purchase an 'Epic Flying Mount,' one of the fastest mounts in the game, she offered anyone, male or female, playing on her server the opportunity to perform a variety of sexual acts in exchange for the in-game currency. In a posting on Craigslist on 4/8/07, the player stated that if someone were to transfer 5000 gold pieces to her account to purchase an epic flying mount, then that person can, "mount," her. It stated that she wanted whoever was going to do this to send her a picture so that she could evaluate the perspective, "John."

The posting player stated that her email was full with messages from people that were interested in taking her up with her offer. In a response that she placed on Craigslist the next day, she scolded the other players for making such a big deal out of all of this. She stated that she was able to get both things that she was looking for. She wanted both a mount for her character, and one for herself.

Korean dies after game session

A [South Korean man](#) died in 2007 after reportedly playing an online computer game for 50 hours with few breaks. The 28-year-old man collapsed after playing the game Starcraft at an internet cafe in the city of Taegu, according to South Korean authorities.

The man had not slept properly, and had eaten very little during his marathon session, said police. Identified as Lee, he started playing Starcraft and only paused playing to go to the toilet and for short periods of sleep.

The cause of death was heart failure stemming from exhaustion. He was taken to hospital following his collapse, but died shortly after. He had recently been fired from his job because he kept missing work to play computer games.

Teenager gets DVT after a whole day with a console

A boy who spent an entire day kneeling down playing computer games needed hospital treatment for a blood clot in his leg. [Dominic Patrick](#), 14, from Merseyside, developed deep vein thrombosis after a rainy day inside with a games console. The potentially dangerous condition was caused because Dominic had his legs tucked under his body.

Dominic noticed something was wrong when, after getting up from playing games all day, he got pins and needles in his legs and one of his calves swelled up. When this failed to go away, his father initially put it down to "[growing pains](#)", but eventually took him to a doctor, who diagnosed DVT.

Plague ravage World of Warcraft

In 2005, [Blizzard introduced a new area](#) to its popular MMORPG, World of Warcraft. The boss of the area was able to [cast a spell](#) called Corrupted Blood, which was supposed to infect and cause damage to all the players nearby. Contrary to what Blizzard planned, however, the players got their pets infected and used them to transmit the disease outside of the area,

contaminating pretty much everyone around them. The plague spread through the game servers and thousands of players died. Blizzard managed to create quarantine zones within the game, and shortly afterwards it introduced a 'cure' for the infection. Despite the remedies the event created a lot of buzz in online forums and community websites.

Woman was virtually raped in Second Life

A Belgian user of Second Life was forced, by using a so called “voodoo doll” --a piece of code that takes the form of a regular object as a cup or pen or whatever but in fact gives control of your avatar-- to perform sexually explicit behavior. In theory, a user must give his consent in order for other player to take control of his avatar, but using one of the above mentioned voodoo dolls and some persuasion you can make a user (especially a new one) to give access to his avatar. After the incident, Brussels' public prosecutor asked patrol detectives of the Federal Computer Crime Unit to go on Second Life to investigate the “virtual rape”.