

Abstract

This thesis is an ethnographic look at the player communities inside of the setting of digital online games in the MMORPG genre. The goal of this work is introducing MMORPG as an interesting and vibrant field for anthropological research. Another goal is an inquiry into player raiding communities in the game World of Warcraft. Thesis is researching questions of what is motivating players to join into guilds, how are they staying together and why do they fall apart. Research was conducted through methods of participant observation inside of the game's virtual environment, interviews with players, and the Internet space formed around the game was also observed. Whole research was conducted online.

Key words: MMORPG, digital ethnography, digital anthropology, guilds, World of Warcraft