



Changing WoW: Motivation and Knowledge Acquisition in Modding

Benedict P. Agulto

benedict.agulto@taylors.edu.my

Taylors University (Malaysia)

Abstract

Game studies in the past focused largely on the accounts of expertise that examine gameplay in a collaborative and networked in-game environment. However, individual contribution in changing the game architecture and gaming experience of the players have not been given much attention. This study focuses on the motivation and intention of game fans (modders) in producing modification in the award-winning MMORPG, World of Warcraft (WoW). In October 2007, Blizzard Entertainment announced a milestone of WoW players exceeding 12 million worldwide (www.us.blizzard.com) and considered to be one of the fastest growing MMORPG. Results were derived using semi-directed VOIP interviews with 36 regular modders who were recruited through wow.curse.com and snowballing technique. To substantiate the findings, the concept of the New Organisation was used to frame the analysis of the collaborative and autonomous nature of fan labor. This paper argues on the impact of situated learning and knowledge acquisition of the modders outside the game world as they continuously develop, and modify the gaming experience of the players and the actual game itself. This uncompensated and time consuming labor in exchange of immaterial contributions is inevitable as the modders are motivated through other forms of reward as a positive consequence.