An Ethnographic Study on the Video Game Culture

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Benjamin D. Herbert

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“Abstract”

My capstone project was an ethnographic study on the video game culture. Throughout my research on the video game culture I discovered that video games are all around us, they are ingrained in our daily lives, and have created it’s own language. I took many different steps to study the video game culture. The first step I took in studying this culture is reading a plethora of different articles based on the video game culture. I then started to conduct interviews with people that play a big role and play a role in the video game culture. Also, I conducted a survey at Capital University asking the 55 respondents about how much they play video games in a given week. Lastly, I studied the video game language of Halo 3. To study this language I played with some of the best players in the world and learned how the language operated. In the end, I discovered that video games are everywhere and have been apart of this generation since they were children. The culture continues to grow day by day and is affecting everyone differently.
The video game culture is a form of media culture that has been influenced by video games. People that are involved in this culture are usually referred to as Gamer’s. The term “Gamer” was acquired over time, it is a title given to a person who enjoys playing video games. Members of the culture were the ones who coined this term. Gaming has evolved from being a hobby to being played competitively and then into a profession. Outsiders all look at people who play video games as gamers or as people who enjoy video games.

The gaming culture represents all that is good and evil and everything that is anything. Anything is possible in the video game culture. Every game has its own imaginary world that every gamer can enter and share with others. Gamers do several different activities when it comes to be part of the gaming culture. Gamers are people who play video games, whether it is for fun, or for money. There are five types of different gamers, the casual gamer, moderate gamer, competitive gamer, professional gamer, and the hardcore gamer. Each title of gamer comes with a different set of qualities and traits. The one thing they all have in common is that they play video games and are part of the video game culture.

Each different type of gamer has their own description and set of qualities and traits. Casual gamers are known for playing video games just for fun. Some competitive aspect is thrown in there but they are mainly just played for enjoyment. Casual gamers look at gaming as more of a social aspect, a group of friends will get together and all play video games together. Casual gamers usually play video games with others but will play independently for peer enjoyment, but it is different from person to person. Casual gamers can be anyone; they have no known identity because everyone has played a video game just for fun or to try it out. Also, an arcade is a hotspot for casual games because they will be gaming just for fun with others. Some casual gamers will not even own a video game system (Gamer 2013).
The moderate gamer is known for playing video games on a weekly basis. Moderate gamers usually own an Xbox 360, PC or a Playstation 3. They are not known for playing games for long periods of time but more so playing video games one to two hours a day, sometimes even more. They are known for enjoying the storyline of a video game and what it has to offer. It is very similar to keeping up with a TV show; it does not take too much time out of their day but gives them a relaxing moment during the day (Gamer 2013).

Gamers who look at video games as a competitive aspect are known for their competitive edge. They enjoy winning and hate losing in video games. These gamers are known for having a competitive edge and competitive edge transcribes to video games. They are usually the ones in the group of gamers who say they will beat you in that game and usually challenging others to video games. They play certain video games more serious than others because they need to practice more if they want to win. These gamers will play for hours at a time, and sometimes just play the same game over and over again (Gamer 2013). This does not mean casual or moderate gamers cannot be competitive in video games. Everyone likes to win; there is no denying that. Competitive gamers take it to the next level with video games so they can be better at it. Casual and moderate gamers are mostly just competitive during the moment of the video game.

The professional gamer is known for being the best at a certain game or genre of video games. Most people feel that all professional gamers do is play video games, this can be true in some aspects but it is their job. This is how they make their money. It is just like any other person working a nine to five job, they need to put in at least six to eight hours a day if they still want to keep on making money (Gamer 2013). Most moderate and competitive gamers look up to professional gamers for advice to better their skills in a certain video game. It depends on the professional gamer, but each professional gamers salary usually ranges from $35,000 - $250,000.
a year (Nieva 2012). It is just like professional sports, the better you are and the bigger fan base you have, the more you get paid.

Electronic sports (eSports) comprise the competitive play of video games. The most common games associated with eSports are real time strategy, fighting, racing, first person shooter, and massively multiplayer online. These are all game genres that pro gamers strive off of and eSports helps regulates these games and keep them competitive. Events such as Major League Gaming (MLG), Global Starcraft II League (GSL), World Cyber Games(WCG), Dreamhack, and Intel Extreme Masters provide both real-time casting of streamed games, and cash prizes to the winners (Nieva 2012). These events are what professional gamers live for and make most of their money off of. Some cash prizes at these events can be up to $250,000 and then they keep getting higher as the gaming culture evolves.

Different gamers are known for different things. The gamer that lives the game is a person who usually projects their life into a video game. Massively multiplayers online (MMO) are games that people tend to live in. hey get so tuned in with the game that the video game because part of their daily routine, such as brushing your teeth every morning. Professional gamers can fall under this category because they have a daily routine when it comes to playing video games but they get paid for it. The person playing an MMO is able to create a character that they find most interesting. Then their character lives in a virtual world and is able to buy stuff, interact with other players, and go on quests. It’s never ending, some MMOs are close to real world living but are just digitized. Someone may look at their life as boring and they just have a common job, but in MMOs they can be a knight that saves the earth from destruction. In an interview with Connor Pinkerton a former hardcore gamer who could not go a day without playing World of Warcraft said this about hardcore gamers, “The game consumes you, I remember playing for hours upon
hours. Many of my friends played WOW (World of Warcraft) so we would just communicate 
online and play WOW. It was a lot more exciting than hanging out and watching movies. We 
could do whatever we wanted in WOW” (Pinkerton 2013).

Gamers do a variety of things that represent many different aspects of the culture. A 
casual gamer is someone who solely plays video games for entertainment purposes. The Nintendo 
Wii is a highly classified system for the casual gamer. The Nintendo Wii releases a lot of games 
for people to play with groups of people. They are more party oriented games. Nintendo Wii is 
not the only system that makes games for casual gamers; Xbox 360 and Playsation 3 both make 
games for a friendly fun environment for gamers. A casual gamer can be anywhere from to 5 
years old to 85 years old. Casual gamers do not play every day or hours at a time (Casual Game). 
They more so pick up the video game just for fun. It is more looked at a time to relieve stress and 
enjoy life.

Moderate gamers take video games a step further than casual gamers. These types of 
gamers play a variety of different games simply for the story line and the online play. A moderate 
gamer will play a video game finish it and then hope there is a squeal for it. It is very similar to 
following a TV or a movie series (Gamer 2013). Moderate gamers have a wide range of interests 
and enthusiast toward creative and diverse games. They spend a moderate amount of time playing 
video games, but not a lot because they simply do not have the time. Nintendo’s president Satoru 
Iwata has stated that they designed the new Wii U to cater to a core gamer that is between the 
casual and hardcore gamer (Iwata Asks).

Next we have people who look at video games as a competition. Also competitive gamers 
prefer to take significant time and practice on games. They get more involved with games and try 
to master them. Video games can be very competitive and some gamers use games to get their
daily fix of competitiveness in. This usually consists of people playing online multiplayer where two teams go head to head and one team comes out victorious. These gamers will go to tournaments, but not to win it but to simply enjoy it and get a competitive fix from the game. It brings a new atmosphere to competitive gaming (Gamer 2013).

Next we have the professional gamer. This is very similar to the gamer that plays games as a competitive. Each professional gamer started off playing games to get a competitive fix in, but they happened to be far superior to everyone else in the game. Professional gamers make a living off of playing video games; some professional gamers will play one or several different games. These are the gamers that go to tournaments and place very high in the rankings, top 10. Prize money in video game tournaments can range from $100 to $100,000 (Twitch 2013). These gamers make most of their income from prize money and streaming online videos on twitch.tv. Twitch.tv is a website where gamers (usually professional gamers) stream themselves live playing video games. Most professional gamers give a commentary while they are playing too. They make most of their money off of advertisements because hundreds of thousands of people access twitch.tv daily.

Lastly we have the hardcore gamer. The hardcore gamer is someone that lives the game. They will project their life into the video game and live it. These gamers usually work a part time job and then play the game with their free time. Usually these gamers will play with a group of people online and have their week planned out in the game where they will do different things every night in the game with the people they game with. In an interview with Connor Pinkerton a former hardcore gamer said, “I would wake up go to school, go to practice, get home, eat, do homework and then play World of Warcraft as long as I could. It affected my sleeping patterns
because sometimes I would get so involved in the game I would lose track of time” (Pinkerton 2013).

“Casual/Moderate Gamers”

“Competitive/Professional Gamers”

“Hardcore Gamer”
Anyone can categorize himself or herself as a gamer; they should just need to follow one of the guidelines above to put themselves in the right group. The qualifications above state which type of gamer they are. Any ethnicity or gender can fall into whatever type of gamer. There is no set qualifications to be a gamer, because anyone that just plays video games for fun can say they are a casual gamer.

To be a casual gamer they should play video games from time to time to be considered a causal gamer. A casual gamer should play video games at minimum of once a week to be considered a casual gamer. A moderate gamer should play video games anywhere from 3-5 times a week. The main qualification they should meet is that they have played a certain video game for years. This is because the game keeps on coming out with sequels and they keep on playing it because they enjoy the story line.

A competitive gamer should play video games 5-7 times a week. The main qualification a competitive gamer should meet is specializing in a series of games. A competitive gamer will play a certain video game from release date all the way until the sequel is released. The
qualification a competitive gamer must meet is being competitive; they also do research on how to get better at the certain game they are playing. A competitive gamer does not need to participate in tournaments because online multiplayer sometimes is enough competitiveness for them.

Professional gamers need to meet many qualifications in order to be a pro. They need to have a sponsorship, they usually have a team they are on (which also has more sponsorships), and most of their income should come from playing video games. To be considered a pro you need to place in the top ranks in highly respected tournaments, one highly respected tournament is Major League Gaming (MLG). Placing in the top ten in MLG is highly respected and people will look up to you as a pro gamer. Placing high in tournaments is the benchmark for becoming a pro gamer after that the sponsorships and income usually come to you (MLG Products).

The hardcore gamers main qualification is living the game or having a daily routine with a video game. Hardcore gamers usually have hundreds of hours and even days logged into a single game. In an interview with Connor Pinkerton a former hardcore gamer, he said, “My WOW account had over 265 days played on it and that was just on of my accounts” (Pinkerton 2013). They project themselves into the game and visualize themselves as the person in the game. Hardcore gamers find life much more interesting in the MMO or in other games. Hardcore gamers will develop their own language in the game so they can communicate faster with one another, or explain different aspects of the game. In a interview with Connor Pinkerton a former hardcore gamer he said, “There were moments while playing WOW that I enjoyed the game more then real life. That is when I knew I took it to far. I passed the realm of being a hardcore game” (Pinkerton 2013).
To become a casual gamer one just needs to play video games every once in a while, for the enjoyment of it. A moderate gamer should play multiple video games for the enjoyment and the storyline of the video game. A competitive gamer should pick one game that they are good at in multiplayer and practice it. These gamers usually play popular games so they have more people they can play against online. They specialize in one game, just like an athlete specializes in one sport (Gamer 2013).

A pro gamer specializes in one game, but makes their living playing that video game. To be a pro gamer you need a sponsorship and need to be part of a pro team. You also must place in the top ranks in highly respected tournaments to become a pro gamer. Hardcore gamer need to play a MMO (ex. World of Warcraft) or put a ton of time into video games. People are able to play MMOs casually but to be a hardcore gamer you need to live that MMO and put hundreds of days into it.

Causal and moderate gamers have very limited boundaries. They play video games like people watch movies, simply for enjoyment. They will sometimes not touch a video game for a month and then play every day when a new game comes out. It is very easy for someone to become a casual or moderate gamer and it is very easy for someone to get out of these groups as well.

Sometimes it is hard for competitive, professional and hardcore gamers to get out of the group. Competitive gamers will sometimes become obsessed with the game they play and put hours into the game each day. They will get obsessed with the idea of becoming a pro and it will affect their daily lives. It is also hard to become a competitive gamer because someone can simply not get good at a video game even if they put hours into it (Miller 2013).
It is very hard to become a professional gamer. If you place in the top ten at highly respected tournament then you are almost guaranteed to become a pro and get a sponsorship. There is so many people out there trying to do it that it diminishes everyone’s chances greatly. Pro gamers are extremely good at what they do that what makes them a pro. They will put many years into one game just to be the best at it. It is not hard to get out of being a pro gamer, but it can be addictive which makes its hard to quit (Magee 2013). It is also their income so some may simply not stop because it is their job. Also, pro gamers tend to say the game they are pro in becomes very boring because it is the same thing over and over again.

It is very easy to become a hardcore gamer. This is because some MMOs are so fun that they become addictive. They are similar to cigarettes if you give them the time of the day then you will eventually become addicted (Pinkerton 2013). When playing a MMO hours feel like minutes and most people want to keep on completing missions, but the problem is that most MMOs have endless missions and this is why it becomes addictive. Once you are in the group of hardcore gamers it is very hard to get out. The best way to do it is to just go cold turkey. You have to cancel your subscription and not even play the game anymore. Usually when you are a hardcore gamer most of your friends are people who play MMOs so the main thing to do is not hang out with them because they may talk you back into it (Pinkerton 2013).

Roles can change greatly in the gamer culture. Every gamer starts off as a casual gamer and if they like it they move their way up to a moderate gamer, but here is where role change makes a huge difference. Moderate gamers can either go from a competitive gamer or straight to a hardcore gamer. It all depends on what path they take. Usually most gamers stay at moderate gaming but it depends on how much interest they have in video games with which role they decide to take. Usually the more competitive gamer will go the route of competitive gamer and
hopefully move onto pro gaming. The person that enjoy playing video games and can’t get enough of them usually become a hardcore gamer. Each gamer can perform whatever role they want it just depends how far they want to take gaming (Miller 2013).

The easiest way to perform multiple roles is for a competitive/professional gamer and moderate gamer. Competitive/pro gamers will have the one game they practice all the time but will sometimes play other games they enjoy. It is hard to be a competitive/professional and hardcore gamer because both roles demand many hours of game play each day.

Roles for gamers can change whenever. A professional gamer can decide one day he doesn’t want to be a pro gamer anymore and will just play games for fun, thus assuming the role as the casual or moderate gamer. This goes for a competitive gamer and even a hardcore gamer. It also depends if they are addicted to video games then it would be hard for them to change roles because they are stuck in one. The main reason a gamer should change their role in gaming is because it is negatively affecting their daily lives. Competitive, professional and hardcore gamers will usually have to change their roles because it is negatively affecting their daily lives.

The hierarchies in the gaming culture are the gamers. If gamers are not enjoying something about a certain game the creators of the game will fix it. They release betas for games where they let the public test them out and then make changes based on what the gamers have said about the game (MLG Products 2013). Games with a high skill ceiling are constantly being updated because the consumers find things wrong with them or point out what could be better with the game.

The gaming culture is ruled by the major video game companies and major tournament holders such as MLG. The idea of games is created by the companies and then the fans, the
gamers give their reviews and then the creator’s releases updates for the game to make them better (MLG Products 2013).

“What an MLG Tournament Looks Like”
Members of the gaming culture will almost always now meet online and play against each other or with each other. Anyone with high speed Internet and an Xbox 360, Playstation 3 or PC can play online if they own certain games. You are able to play with people from all over the world, in online gaming.

Some people get together and have local area networks, also known as LANs. This is where everyone brings their video game console and TV to one place and links all of them together so they can play with each other or against each other. These can be held at people homes or wherever the right equipment is to hook it up (The 8-Bit Scholar).

Video game tournaments are another area where gamers meet up and play each other, and with each other. It depends on how big the tournament is but tournaments can have 1000s of people or as little as 10 people. It just all depends on who is hosting it and how popular the game is and most of all how much money is involved. Tournaments usually supply the TVs and video
game systems for the people who enter to play them. Tournaments can cost anywhere from five
dollars to $500 to enter (The 8-Bit Scholar).

The most dominant value in video gaming is playing fair and not cheating. People do not
like to lose and a lot of people find ways to cheat in online multiplayer when playing video
games. Gamers frown upon cheaters in video games. It is next to near impossible to cheat at video
game tournaments, but if caught you are immediately eliminated and is known as a cheater in the
video game world. No mad how good you are at a video game if you are caught cheating, you
will always be known as a cheater and not respected as a skillful gamer (O’Brien 2013).

Gamers can talk with other gamers about other games. If two people have an interest in a
game the conversation can be endless about the video game. If you play video games then you
will have something in common with all gamers. All pro gamers are open to talk with their fans
over social networking. Many pro gamers commentate live while they are playing video games.
They will stream themselves live on twitch.tv and thousands of people will watch them play.
Every gamer is open to talking to other gamers; it is a friendly community for the most part.
Information is spread quickly in the gaming culture because gamers will help other gamers
improve their skill (Twitch 2013).

“Kev Z Streaming From Twitch”
It depends on the situation when it comes to appropriate gaming talk. When playing video games with friends’ social talk is acceptable. Talk about the game here and there is fine but a true gamer will never spoil what is coming up next in a video game. He may critique someone’s playing style to help them get better, but not tell him how a video game ends.

When at a video game tournament it is not appropriate to socialize with your teammates while you are in a game. You strictly only talk about what is going on in the game, what you are doing in the game and what the other team is doing in the game. When money is on the line no one cares about what you did this past weekend, everyone wants the advantage over the other team.

Hardcore gamers usually have a mix of both tournament talk and social talk. MMOs usually have a lot of down time in them and this is when you can socialize with your friends. Then there are other times when the game gets serious and you have to tell your teammates what is going on in the game.
The most common communicative rituals are playing games online with other people. You can play online with anyone around the world at any time in online gaming. Also, gamers will get together and play either the same video game or different video games together. This brings more of a social aspect to gaming rather than just playing online with other people. This can happen at a gamers house and everyone else will bring all there equipment to the same place and play video games together, this is known as a LAN, Local Area Network (Squire).

Other rituals will be competing at tournaments such as MLG. Thousands of gamers will get together and compete at a tournament together. Some people just go there be spectators and watch the best in the world play. For both of these rituals a lot of different communication acts are going on (MLG Products 2013). Usually at tournaments it is strictly talking about video games, how they can do better and what other teams are doing. At home LANs friends will joke around tell stories and exchange information. A home LAN is more of a hangout for friends to get together and play video games. Some home LANs are strictly focused on practicing for a certain video game. At these LANs usually communication is all about the video game and more of the games language is used (Squire).

“LAN”
Communication mostly occurs when you are playing in a video gaming tournament. You are constantly communicating with your teammates and if you are not then you are not a very good team. Video games teach discipline, social skills and teamwork while playing at a high competitive level. Communication occurs the least when you are just playing a video game by yourself and not online. It is very similar to watching a movie when you are playing a video game by yourself. You are focused on the storyline and what is going to happen next. Also, communication happens a lot at home LANs because you are getting together with a bunch of friends. A home LAN is a very social environment if you are playing video games for pure enjoyment.

Anything is and will be said over online gaming. It is frowned upon and you can be reported for it but usually nothing ever happens to the person that is reported. Some vulgar language can be used in online gaming but it all part of the culture. When someone in the gaming culture is talking down to another gamer it is called, “trolling” and trolling is when you say mean things to another gamer just to get them mad. You don’t mean it, but you are saying it to get in the other gamers head so they choke or get mad at you.
Trolling is even allowed at gaming tournaments. It is part of the culture and will probably never leave the gaming culture. No offense is supposed to be taken from it because it shouldn’t be taken literally. Some nonverbal rules in gaming are associated with different games. The overview of a nonverbal rule is that if you are far superior to the person that you are playing you may mess around with your character in the game so it is clearly obvious to your opponent that you are not trying. This is another form of trolling in the gaming culture. This is not frowned upon but some gamers will not do it because they have a little more respect than other gamers.

I would say trolling in the gaming culture is valued greatly among certain gamers. Even though trolling is not respectful it is sometimes the key to certain gamers’ fame. A pro gamer named Greg Fields, also goes by Idra is known for trolling his opponents. He will be very disrespectful to his opponents even during highly respected tournaments. He will tell them they are awful at the game and need to quit. But the trolling Idra does led to his fame. He is one of the best at the game he plays but he is better known for his trolling and that is why he has a bigger fan base. More people enjoy watching him because he brings something new to the game rather than doing what everyone else does (IdrA 2013).

Trolling is definitely a dominant culture value in the gaming culture. This is because there are better players out there than Idra but he makes more money than them because of the show he puts on. People do find trolling disrespectful but it’s what makes the gaming culture exciting. Usually what happens in a match stays in a match. Most people do not take it straight to heart. Trolling is part of the game and it would and all types of gamers do it. Beating someone in a game gives you bragging rights that are very similar to trolling (What Is a Troll?).

An example of trolling would be if two people are playing Mario together and the goal is to see who can get the farthest through the game without dying once, wins. So player one will
play and get to level four without dying and during the time player one is playing he may be
trolling player two by saying you are never going to beat this, you are done. While this is going
on player two may just be sitting there simply saying nothing or saying just wait, or watch me
beat it. Then when it is players two turn if he is closing in on player one and feeling confident he
may start trolling him and start saying that he is the best and that he knew all along he was going
to beat him.

This is common in most games when people are playing each other. It is all part of the
competitiveness in video games. Trolling opponents in video games is not only part of the culture
but it is fun. Each person does it and it is not taken to heart. The reason why most gamers do not
get upset is because they have trolled before and they know how fun it is. The act of trolling is
performed by all types of gamers whether they know it or not. Trolling does not need to take
place during the game too. It can take place before, during and after (Castella 2013).

There are no rules in trolling, but it highly recommended not being too offensive. This is
because you can hurt someone’s feelings. There is a line that gamers should not cross and most
do not cross it. It is not necessary to troll when you are gaming with your friends for fun, but
whoever provokes the troll first that’s when everyone else will give their two cents. Trolling can
either be very loud or low key, it all depends on the person’s personality, or the seriousness of the
game (Castella 2013).

There are usually three roles played when someone is trolling, the person who is winning,
the loser, and the bystander. The person who is winning is usually the one who is trash talking
and the dominant figure. The loser is usually the one who is silent and trying his hardest not to
lose. Then the bystander is someone who is watching the game or not losing or winning. If the
winner wins he usually continues to troll, but if the loser ends up winning in the end (which happens a lot), then roles are flipped but more intense (Castella 2013).

“An example of trolling”

Communication is a big part in the video game culture. Certain games involve team work and strategy to beat your opponent. This means carefully planning needs to be put in place to execute a plan. Certain video games are like sports you need a strategy and your strategy should change based on each team you are playing. For example, if there are eight people playing Halo 4 together, four on four, each team will have their own set of communication. The reason why teams communicate is to tell each teammate what they are doing and what the other team is doing. Communication is crucial among teammates, because it makes everyone much more aware, rather than walking around aimlessly. Also, with communication everyone falls into their
own role, in the game you will have two support players, who do most of the damage, then an offensive player, the person who will capture the flag, and then your slayer the person who racks up the most points.

With communicating in this game it is less likely that you will confuse roles in the game. The communicating roles out of the game work a little differently. The two support players are usually the ones communicating the most during the game. They see almost everything that is going on, so they are always calling out the other team. The slayer will only say whom he killed in the game just to let everyone else know. The offensive player usually just says where they are and if there are guys on him.

Now each person has his or her own role in game and out of the game, this is where Halo 4’s language comes into place. When a support player is telling his teammates that a person is in sniper tower, he will not just say opponent is in the sniper tower. He will say, “One S2,” this means everyone will look to the middle level of the sniper tower and focus fire on one opponent. What does, “One S2” mean? If a sniper tower has three levels a team will break it down to S1, meaning the bottom level, S2 the middle level, and then S3 the top level. Also, some sniper towers have ramps leading up to the S3 so they will call that, “S Ramp”. These are one of many different call outs for the game, because some levels you play on have two Sniper towers, each sniper tower needs their own distinctive callout so everyone knows where to look. Halo 4 has around twenty levels; each level carrying a set of twenty or more callouts, this creates a language that is tailored towards playing Halo. Video game language varies from game to game and that’s what makes the video game so remarkable.

The slayer and the offensive players know all these callouts and will say them every a during a match. Their callouts are a little different than the support players. The slayer on the
team may say, “Two on me,” which means there are two opponents trying to kill him. This lets his other teammates know that they should get over to him to save his life. Also the offensive player and slayer will say, “S3, one shot.” This is signifying to the other teammates that the opponent at S3 only needs one shot to the head. The reason why the person who called that out cannot kill him is because he cannot get a clear shot on them or they are also, “one shot.”

Each player had their own set of roles, but these roles intertwine with each other. Each player will assume other roles, mid game just to benefit the team more. The communication during a Halo match tends to be loud because it is a fast pace game and everything happens very quickly. The main rules for this communication in a match is to strictly focus on in game communication, and if you are not communicating you are not doing your job, and this is looked down upon. Each halo game has its own set of language but the concept of it remains the same, it is only improved with each game.

“Halo Callouts”

I obtained a lot of my information from over the years of being part of the gaming culture. I have been a gamer since I was 6 years old and I have been through every stage of gaming I have
mentioned in here. I have been a causal gamer, a moderate gamer, a competitive gamer, and a hardcore gamer. I have not been a professional gamer but I once strived for it. I have been to many video game tournaments including Major League Gaming, which is now the most popular gaming tournament in North America (MLG Products 2013). I have also participated in a few gaming tournaments as well. Going to the Major League Gaming tournaments is where I was able to study the gaming culture more and understand gaming better as a whole.

Also, I received some additional information online through various websites. I have received information from gamingculture.org, gamasutra.com, wiki.teamliquid.net. These websites helped me formulate what I was going to talk about in the gaming culture. I also studied the World of Warcraft language at i.wow.joystiq.com. This is where I realized that most games have their own language and the only way to understand it is by playing the game.

In a survey based on the video game culture from fifty five participants ranging from ages of 18 – 50 years, male and female. I came up a wide range of perspectives on people’s outlook when it comes to playing video games and how they view the video game culture. It showed some very interesting results and those video games has been prominent in people’s lives since they were children.

First off, I asked how often do you play video games? To my surprise only 6 people said they never play video games. Everyone else said they would play video games on a weekly basis. A particular female that took the survey said she never plays video games. I then asked her if she ever plays games on her Smartphone, or web based video games. She then changed her answer to frequently play video games. I then realized that video games are so ingrained to our culture that
we do not even realize we play them on a daily basis.

Next in my survey I asked during an average week how many hours do you play video games? I found out that twenty-seven people said they play video games about three to nine hours a week. The rest either plays more than nine hours a week or less than three hours a week. I concluded a great deal of information based off how much people play video games a week. On average Catholics or christens attend church anywhere from one to three hours a week and they consider themselves to be part of the religious culture. Half of the people who took this survey say they invest anywhere from three to nine hours a week in video games.
In my next question, I asked at what age did you start playing video games? The ages ranged from three years old to twelve years old. This shows that video games have been apart of our lives since we have been kids. Everyone answered this question, this shows me that the majority of people who took this survey still play video games even at such a young age, and only six people have stopped playing video games. Video games may be more prominent in our lives as children but they are still present today. They are not dropped like athletics are in our life. I remember playing a bunch of competitive as a kid but now at age twenty-two I cannot remember the last time I picked up a baseball glove. But I can recall the last time I picked up a video game controller.

My next question, I asked if they considered video games to be a social activity? Forty-three people said they do consider it to be a social activity and twelve people do not believe it is a
social activity. This led me into my next question, do you prefer playing video games with friends, online multiplayer, or independently? Only thirteen people said they prefer playing video games independently. This lines up with people who said they do not consider video games to be a social activity. Video games are not a social activity if you play them by yourself all the time. But the other forty-two people said they prefer playing video games online or with friends.
In my next question, I asked what type of game do you consider yourself to be? Twenty-five people said they consider themselves as casual gamers, sixteen considered themselves moderate gamers, eight considered themselves competitive gamers, and six people considered themselves as hardcore gamers. From this data I have concluded that most people play video games for pleasure, the rest play video games because they are tuned in with the gaming culture. I explained to the people taking the survey that hardcore gaming is having a daily routine with a video game. Six people said that they have a daily routine when it comes to playing video games.
My last two questions were the most important when it came to this survey. The first question is, do you have a connection with people that play the same video games as you? Forty-six people said they do the other nine said they do not. The final question I asked, do you consider video gaming to be it’s own culture. Forty-seven people said that video gaming is its own culture and the other eight did not. I concluded from these two questions is that video gaming is it’s own culture. This is because in other cultures people have a connection between each other because they are from the same area and have the same set of values. With video games, people who have played the same video games have a connection with each other because they either grew up playing a video game or both enjoy the same types of video games. This shows that people cannot
even know each but when they find out that they both enjoy the same video game, they have something to talk about and they can relate to each other.

**Do you have a Connection with People that play the same Video Games as you?**

- Yes: 84%
- No: 16%

**Do you Consider Video Gaming to be its Own Culture?**

- Yes: 85%
- No: 15%
From personal experience, when I meet someone that played Final Fantasy VII while growing up we instantly have a conversation about the game. The conversation goes much further than just talking about the game. We will talk about how mad we would make our parents because we would put hours into the game, or sneak out in the middle of the night to play video games and then eventually get caught. We also discuss if we play it still and how it brings back good memories. These memories vary from person to person but each memory has a story behind and some are good and bad. Whether we like it or not video games shaped our youth and still is shaping who we are today. You can either go as far as saying that video games helps ones attention span because hours upon hours have been put in video games and every video game requires concentration, just like studying and paying attention in class.

I feel like I had a great influence on this culture. By going around asking several gamers in person, online gamers, and gamers at Capital University they all felt that they had a moment of realizations. Each gamer I talked to never thought about gaming as a whole culture. Then after that they went off about each different type of gamer and how trolling is a huge part of our culture. They realized that gaming has its own community that we have created over the years and that it is evolving every day.

In a short interview with Peter Nguyen a Social Media Specialist, Brand Ambassador and creator of @WTFGamersOnly (followed by more than 100,000 people on Instagram and Twitter combined), I asked him how has the video game culture evolved since you were and a kid? He had this to say,

“Gaming use to be a social gathering. Friends would come over to game with you. When Goldeneye 007 and Perfect Dark came out for the Nintendo 64, sleepovers became a tradition on the weekends. When friends continued to beat you or you beat them, accusations of people
staring at each other screens would stir. Friends would become enemies and the test of skills would be tested immediately. When the competition ends, the friendship begins again. In modern day, once you're accused of being a hacker for being too good, you're deleted and never heard of ever again. Friends no longer come over to game because split screens became an annoyance. See you later in-game bro. Don't try to come over unless you BYOS (Bring Your Own Setup). Let's not forget to mention the insane amount of hours and dollars that were put into the arcades. If you think $60 is expensive for a game, you've never lived in the Arcade era and I'm not talking about modern day Arcades filled with claw machines. It's rare in present day to find an arcade that has stayed true. Arcades were definitely the best place to go to before a movie starts. I'm glad to see that some of the movie theaters have them now” (Nguyen 2013).

My experience was great as a researcher for this culture, because not only am I a gamer, I got to understand the culture that I am part of as whole. I have never broken down what the gaming culture is, but looking at it from a research standpoint, gamers really have created their own culture. I did find it difficult to split up the gaming culture into five different categories. I feel like there are more types of gamers, but I wanted to be more direct and understanding of the gaming culture. This culture is extremely vast and has so much to offer, which made it difficult to categorize each sub group in this culture.

Overall, it was definitely a great experience. For the past two years I have been out of the gaming culture and it was great being reunited with it. At the midnight release for Halo 4, I got to talk to a bunch of gamers who gathered together to buy the game. Each gamer has a different background and talking to everyone about the different type of gamers they are. Everyone was extremely nice and talkative, I felt as if there wasn’t any bad blood between anyone. The atmosphere was great; you could tell that everyone was friends and loved to play video games.
Gamestop, the store that sells video games gave out free pop and food for everyone waiting in line. It was a supportive atmosphere and great environment for everyone.

I learned that there are a variety of gamers out there and that it is hard to put gamers in to five sub categories. I was more in tuned with what other gamers were saying as I was playing video games, instead of just playing for fun. I mainly focused on studying the Halo language and some of the World of Warcraft language. This helped me understand each game better. It also greatly improved my Halo Skills.

The hardest part was putting together all my research together. It was very channeling organizing everyone and putting everything into sub categories’. It was hard to find an in depth research on the gaming culture. That is why I picked this culture because I wanted to expand more on it and understand it better since I have been a part of it for so long. After interviewing people about the culture I began to figure out that the gaming culture had one set concept and people just kept on adding on to it. Gaming is an art and what makes it so creative is that everyone adds to it, whether it’s improving the game, or the language. Everyone has something to offer to it and that is what makes it unique.
Works Cited


In this article I learned about how much people pay to get into video gaming tournaments. It gave me a more in depth analysis on Local Area Networks and playing video games with friends. It touched based on how modern day video games are affecting the culture now. The article touched based on how video games have evolved since we were kids and how advanced technology has become.


This article showed me how trolling effects people outside the gaming. It showed me the motifs behind trolling and the point of it. It reinsured me why trolling is done and why people do it. The article gave an analysis of where trolling takes place and why it takes place.


This article also helped me understand trolling more. The article gave a more in-depth analysis on why people troll and gave examples of trolling. It talked a lot about who does the trolling and said everyone has trolled someone once in their life.


This page really helped me narrow down what a casual game was. It really helped show me that most casual games are web based or on your smart phone. Causal games are targeted to mass audience and are on of the biggest profits in the video game industry. I learned that casual games is what got the video game industry started because casual
games have such a broad audience. More people started playing games and then those gamers branched off into new and different video games.


This article touched based on how video gaming has been apart of our culture since the 1980s. It showed me how the culture has grown and evolved over the decades. It made me realize that this culture is at the beginning and is growing faster than ever. I do not know where the gaming culture will be in ten years but it will be something great and hopefully a huge asset to our society.


This page reinsured me that the five different categories I put gamers into were correct. It expanded on the different types of gamers out there. It showed me that it is hard to put gamers into five categories but this is the best way how to do it. The article gave an in-depth analysis of each type of gamer and talked about how each gamer has evolved.


This biography of Idra showed me how professional gaming works and how to become a professional gamer. It talked about how Idra is famous because he puts on a show when he plays video games. He is known for his trolling and that is why he has a huge fan base. Also, Idra has many sponsorships because he is a professionally gamer and it talked about how he got those sponsorships.


This article is an interview with the President of Nintendo. He goes into how he
wants his video game system to tailor towards all different types of video gamers.

Nintendo has been known for being a casual gamer system and looked at as a get together with friends system. His goal is to try and make a system that is for casual gamers and hardcore gamers. This article just reinforced my reasoning behind the different types of gamers out there and that the industry looks at gamers as I do too.


This article talks about how to become a professional gamer. It gave me a step-by-step process of what professional gamers did to become a pro. It also talks about the traits of a pro gamer. They said teamwork and practice is extremely important when it comes to being a pro gamer. It also talked about cash prizes and salaries of pro gamers.


This article helped me learning more about hardcore gamers and how video gaming can be bad. It made me realize that anything can be addictive if not used correctly. It showed the different characteristics of a person addicted to video games.


This article showed me how MLG tournaments operate. It taught me what tyues of gamers go to these tournaments and what the most popular games our. It gave me statistics on prices and people who attend these tournaments.


In this interview I asked Peter how the video game culture has changed since he
Herbert was a kid. Peter gave me his opinion on how the video game culture has evolved since he was a kid. He also posted it on his Twitter and Instagram page, which he has more than a 100,000 followers on. 100s of people responded back to this question giving me more insight how the video game culture has grown.


This article talks about what a pro gamer goes through before, during and after a gaming tournament. It talks about the preparation for a gaming tournament and how pros practice and get mentally prepared for tournaments. It talked about how some teams get paid than other teams. It also talked about the trolling that goes on at tournaments.


This article expanded more on trolling in video games. It showed me that trolling is part of the video game culture. The main point of this article is how cheating is not accepted like it use to be in the video game culture.


Connor was one of my childhood friends so we talked about his video game addiction and how he use to be a hardcore gamer. This interview reinsured me that a hardcore gamer does exist. Connor met all the traits of a hardcore gamer and it was interesting to see how it affected him and his life.


Twitch is an online website for gamers to stream themselves playing video games.
This website showed me that pro gamers make a lot of money streaming themselves playing video games. The more viewers they get the more sponsorships they get. Twitch is the next step to getting video gaming tournaments on cable television.


This article touched base on the World of Warcraft language. It showed me that each video game has its own language. This article made me want to study other video games language. This was a big turning point in my project because it taught me how vast one game language could be.
“Timeline”

**June 2012:**

First MLG tournament/ Gave me the idea for Project

**November 4-18, 2012:**

Conducted research on project

Started paper

Studied Halo 3 Language

**November - December 18-2, 2012:**

Research

Rough draft 12 pages in

Studied Halo 3 Language

**December 2-16, 2012:**

Finished rough draft/24 pages

**December 16-30, 2012:**

Research

**December - January 16-13, 2012-2013:**

Interview with Connor Pinkerton

**January 13-27, 2013:**

Conducted Research

Studied Language

Started survey

**Month of February 2013:**
Studied Language

**March 3-17, 2013:**

Started Working on paper again

**March 17-31, 2013:**

Finished Paper/ 34 pages

**Month of April 2013:**

Interview with Peter Nguyen

Finishing touches on whole entire project/42 pages