

# And Justice for All - the 10 commandments of Online Games, and then some...

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## ABSTRACT

As part of our research project on the social aspects of gaming and more in particular the structuring of behavior in online multiplayer games using norms and rules, we present an overview of the type of rules used by clans and guilds in both MMOGs and FPS games. Not surprisingly, both genre and player motivation play a role in the selection and creation of rules. We also note that one of the types of behavior addressed in many rules, griefing, needs a more sophisticated analysis than used in previous game research. We conclude by presenting a set of “game commandments” that summarize the rule sets analyzed.

## Keywords

Clans, Guilds, Rules, MMOGs, FPS

## INTRODUCTION

Recent game research shows an increased focus on other aspects than games and play. Perhaps the reason for titles such as: “Rules of Play” [11], “The Ethics of Computer Games” [13], “Cheating” [6], and “The State of Play” [1] is that in everyday interaction there is room for some players to exhibit behavior that disrupts the gaming experience for other players. In online games, griefing and cheating have become aspects that are part of the everyday life for players, perhaps due to the players’ relative anonymity that these games provide [5].

We present an overview of rules that are created by groups of players in order to prevent/prohibit certain behavior by their members in online games. Since most research presented above focuses on Massively Multi Online Games (MMOGs) such as World of Warcraft (WOW), we have broadened our focus to also cover some First Person Shooters (FPS) where the goals of the individual player could be different from the goals of a “social” player in a MMOG.

This article is part of a research project where we wish to expand our theories on the use by groups of players of in game norms and sanctioning with between game formulations of rule sets.

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## BACKGROUND

### Previous work on rules

#### *Rules in game studies*

In [11] Salen and Zimmerman address the issue of rules for (computer games) and game designers. For starters they define the qualities of rules. Rules limit player action, are explicit and unambiguous, are shared by all players, are fixed, are binding, and are repeatable. Furthermore, they distinguish rules on three levels;

1. Constitutive rules: The mathematical rules of the game, what is allowed by the code, or as interpreted by Foo and Koivisto: “Law of the Code” [7].
2. Operational rules: Operational rules are the “rules of play” of a game, the rules that are most often written-out. The “Terms of Service”(TOS) document can be considered as an example of operational rules in online worlds, and in some cases even the “End User License Agreement” (EULA).
3. Implicit rules: Implicit rules are the rules that communicate the “spirit of the game” what is considered “fair play” and can for obvious reasons be broken since there is limited or no possibilities in games to prevent this.

Paradoxically, the last level does not qualify for rules in game play since it by definition has none of the characteristics of these rules are supposed to have according to the same authors..

In the context of role-playing games, [10] discusses three types of rules as well, namely endogenous (rules of the game, defined by the game designer), exogenous (rules players take with them from outside the game into the game), and diegetic rules (rules existing within the game play). One can see the last level as a second order of rules created by the players (the first order being the exogenous rules). The endogenous rules can be mapped on the constitutive and operational rules, as defined by Salen and Zimmerman.

#### *Rules in philosophy and social science*

In philosophy rules have a long history that is not touched upon in the above-mentioned works. Especially the linguistic turn of philosophy in the previous century, where Wittgenstein described e.g., language games, has focused on rules to explain human behavior. Since the early 1970s the theories of Searle [12] are central in the discussions.

Interestingly, of the two types of rules Searle describes, the main one shares the name “constitutive rules” with Salen and Zimmermans. Indeed, many of the examples Searle uses are from the world of games (and sports). In Searles view, the specific issue of constitutive rules is that they produce “institutional facts”, that is, they define meaning. The other category is regulative rules that define what is allowed and disallowed. These constitutive rules differ from Salen and Zimmermans constitutive rules in that they not limit the players (as game rules according to them do by definition) but actually give them possibilities by creating meaning. The same goes for regulative rules that express what is allowed rather than only what is disallowed.

In sociology and related social sciences such as criminology, rules are closely connected to norms. Indeed, in the norm typology presented in [17] rules form one of the columns. However, apart from it is the different types of laws, since the ontological status of laws differs clearly from that of rules, they are (often) issued by a special organ and any law breaking is to be punished following strict procedures and by special persons. In Salen and Zimmerman no such ontological distinctions are made. Indeed the basis for their levels of rules remains unclear unfortunately.

### **Theories on groups**

Group and social psychology has much to offer on defining groups and group related (type of) rules. According to Svedberg [15] a group is formalized through the following three criteria:

1. The group has a central, shared goal.
2. The group is formalized through institutional arrangements (rules and policies).
3. The group is defined through the exclusion of non-members.

If we look at these criteria we can see that a group needs a central and shared goal to coordinate the cooperation and direction of the group. The group further to this is formalized through institutional arrangements (rules and policies) either explicitly or implicitly. The group becomes a group when there are rules to which all members comply, and these rules apply to all of the group’s members. This maps to some of the principles of Salen and Zimmerman but is restricted to members of the group rather than to all players. The rules keep the group together and offer information about what is socially accepted in the group.

Lastly the group is differentiated by the exclusion of every person that is a non-member of the group. This criterion is important because it has much in common with the cohesiveness criterion from social psychology presented below. To be part of a group must be something beneficial that the individual strives for.

In social psychology, according to [2] the following four criteria are used to describe the most important aspects of groups:

1. **Roles:** All members of a group usually have a certain role. This role is sometimes automatically assigned to a person but sometimes individuals acquire certain roles without being formally assigned to that role. The role is actually a set of behaviors that the person holding that position is expected to express in the presence of the group.
2. **Status:** Status is an important part of groups. Most groups have hierarchies and different roles are granted different status. Status is often used as a means to make members follow the rules. A “good” member is granted higher status and can earn higher rank through behavior that is both beneficial for the individual and the individuals higher up in the hierarchy.
3. **Norms:** The rules of the game could be considered to contain both the norms and rules of the group. Norms are powerful means of control, and following the rules or acknowledging them might help the individual earn status within the group.
4. **Cohesiveness:** Cohesiveness is used to describe the forces that keep the group together and is important since it is the cement or glue that keeps the group together. Cohesiveness is a measure of how important it is for members to belong to a certain group.

### **Social organization in MMOGs and FPS**

Before we look at the rules created by different social groups playing games we will give a brief description of the most common forms, namely guilds and clans.

In both FPS games and MMOGs players like to organize themselves in groups. Grouping in clans or guilds is a way to team up with players that share the same preferences in the game or just like to play together. In MMOGs there are more possibilities to form different kinds of groups than in FPS-games, where Guilds can be seen as a large group with a longer life span than the “pick up groups” that typically have a shorter lifespan limited to solving a quest or a mission in the game. Typically FPS games are structured into matches where the players are part of a team for that particular match. When these players compete, they compete as a part of a clan on the same team against another team from another clan.

Both guilds and clans however have to deal with the problems and conflicts within large groups that emerge both internally and externally. This article sets out to explore what actual rules randomly selected guilds and clans find important to have as a written codex of behavior, and therefore none of their rules have been ruled out as less important.

### **Example of behavior to control in computer games: grief play**

Game research and the gaming community have described “grief play” as one of the most prominent behaviors to control using additional rules apart from the game play rules. In [3], Bartle gives a definition on grief play, or more precisely a definition on “Griefers” as: “Bullies prepared to use force or other unpleasantness to get their way or be noticed” [3]. The history of grieving seems to be as old as

MMOGs and Multi User Dungeons (MUDs) as can be seen in the following statement about MUDs: “the protective anonymity (of virtual worlds) also encourages some players to behave irresponsibly, rudely, or even obnoxiously” [4]. New ways of describing grief play have emerged even though Bartle’s definition still holds. Foo and Koivisto [7] give another, perhaps more precise, definition of grief play: “Play styles that disrupt another player’s gaming experience, usually with specific intention to. When the act is not specifically intended to disrupt and yet the actor is the sole beneficiary, it is greed play, a subtle form of grief play” [7]. Foo and Koivisto also suggest four categories of griefing that can serve as a way of structuring the data in this article:

- Harassment: The act of harassing another player has the intention of causing emotional distress to the victim and may include verbal abuse, racial slurs etc. Other types of harassment are: “spatial intrusion”, “event disruption”, stalking and eavesdropping.
- Power imposition: Being powerful or skilled is not considered griefing, but when put into action towards other players such as in the case of “player killing”, “ganking” (a group of characters or one high level player attacks and kills a player below their own level), “corpse killing” or harassment it is.
- Scamming: Fraudulent behavior that includes: “trade scamming”, “promise breaking” and identity deception.
- Greed play: Greed play is a collective term for types of behavior that are directed at winning the game in terms of following the operational rules but with no regard for the “spirit of the game”. Examples of greed play are: “Ninja looting”, “Kill stealing” and “area monopolizing” (camping).

In the current work we wish to focus on the rules made up by social groups playing games together. Thus we will not address constitutive (or endogeneous) rules. The regulative rules in Searles sense will be targeted and the implicit rules as defined by Salen and Zimmerman. However, the implicit rules are closer to the use of norms, which we have discussed earlier [17] so to be more precise we will analyze the making explicit of implicit rules by groups of players.

#### FINDING THE RULES

To get an impression of the rules created by the players themselves we took a convenience sample by searching the Internet using Google with the following key words: “guilds”, “rules” and “clans”. The result was a vast number of hits that would have been impossible to analyze.

The final set of rules analyzed in this paper is as a selection from the convenience sample of guild and clan sites where a collection of rules could be found and the rules were structured enough to be ordered into categories. The sample was limited to 30 guilds and clans in total without

restrictions on what specific games the guilds or clans played. The reason for 20 guilds to be represented in the collection and only 10 clans is that our previous work has a focus on norms and sanctions in guilds in Massively Multiplayer Online Games (MMOGs) [8,17] where we discuss how to differentiate between different kinds of norm breeches based on an in depth study of one guild and literature study [17]. We extend this work to rule sets and also put MMOG guilds in a larger context by comparing with FPS clans.

The games represented in our data set are presented in table 1. Amongst the FPS-games in the data collection the most frequent game was “Counter Strike”, followed by titles such as “Battlefield 2”, “Far cry”, and “Call of Duty”. Amongst the MMOG-games in the data collection the most frequent game was “World of Warcraft”, followed by “Star Wars Galaxies”, “Age of Conan”, “Lord of the rings Online” and “Eve Online”. The frequency and distribution in the list is by no means thought to be representative for the whole population of clans and guilds.

<b>MMOG</b>	
World of Warcraft	8
Star wars galaxies	5
Age of Conan	3
Lord of the rings Online	2
Eve Online	1
Aion	1
<b>Total</b>	20
<b>FPS</b>	
Counter Strike	5
Call of Duty	2
Battlefield 2	2
Far cry	1
<b>Total</b>	10

**Table 1 Games played by the guilds and clans in our data set**

Our data cannot answer any questions about what individual players think about rules and their own player experiences since that would involve collecting game play data or through interviews. For the same reason we cannot make any statements about how the sets of rules are actually used in practice.

#### First impression

The rules come in all shapes and forms. Some guild/clan leaders have rules about almost everything that could potentially happen. Some rule sets are structured with sections regarding what kind of behavior they regulate and other leaders write all rules as a long story containing the dos and don’ts of that particular guild/clan. Competing FPS-Clans do not seem to focus on making their rules or strategies public in the same way as other clans/guilds.

## ANALYSING THE RULES SETS

Since there is no uniform or standard way of writing rules, the following sections will be based on interpretations and generalizations of the rules collected, where if possible a certain rule will be part of a general definition that have been influenced by the above described theories from social and group psychology as well as by game research literature.

This section is divided in three subsections, where the first section introduces the categories used in the analysis of the rules. The second section has its focus on FPS – games and the third section is dedicated to MMOGs.

### *The categorization of rules*

In the analysis we have used the following categories:

- **The group:** Under this category, rules that are specifically targeted at what it takes to be in the group are mentioned. Also the rules and policies of the group and means to exclude non-members from the group are part of this category (see criteria 1,2 and 3 from group psychology and criteria 1-4 from social psychology).
- **Commitment:** “Commitment” is a verbatim term used in many of the rule sets analyzed in this article, and it also is motivated through the institutional arrangements of what it takes to be part of a group (group psychology, criteria 2).
- **Conduct:** This category is also an example of a verbatim term directly from many rule sets but it also communicates what is socially accepted in the group and towards other players (group psychology, criteria 2).
- **Resources:** “Resources” as a term is used by many of the guilds and clans, but is not explicitly mentioned in group or social psychology. It is related to the second criterion from social psychology (status) since the distribution of loot influences the status of an individual player in MMOGs. If we focus on clans, “resources” is connected to criteria 1 from group psychology, where resources are means of achieving the goals of the group. In game research “resources” are seen as one of the motivations of achievers [19].
- **Cheating:** This category is related to criteria 2 from group psychology and criteria 3 “norms” from social psychology. Yet again “cheating” is a verbatim definition from the rule sets.
- **Strategies:** Strategies can be seen as a way to communicate the commands that are important for the group to reach its’ goals (group psychology, criteria 2), but also as a verbatim term from the rule sets.
- **Griefing:** This category is well-known from game research and is related to criteria 2 from group psychology and criteria 3 “norms” from social psychology. Yet again “griefing” is a verbatim term from the rule sets and an established expression for a typical type of behavior.

### **FPS Clan rules**

The rule sets of most FPS clans in our data exhibit a consensus on many rules and the need for rules. Some of

the explanations given by the leaders of the clans in this study state that rules help new members understand how to fit in. It communicates the spirit of the group and what is considered important. Rules are also there to help solve conflicts before they actually appear.

These are the general definitions, or thematic classifications given to the rules from the data collection:

### *The Group*

All 10 FPS clans in our dataset have rules describing what it takes to be in the group and emphasize, “being a good ambassador” for the clan. Being a good ambassador is the verbatim definition that five out of the ten clans use to describe how all players should behave. Five out of ten clans state that a clan member shall always play with the same player-name and the clan-tag visible (i.e. the player shall be identifiable for other players). Playing without the clan-tag repeatedly will in most cases result in the player being kicked from the clan. Another aspect that is common for three of the clans is that “double clanning” or being member of more than one clan at a time should be avoided. There are various ways of reacting to being in more than one clan at the same time, ranging from being kicked from the clan with no exceptions to a more gentle approach where exceptions can be made. All members must at all times and in all cases be loyal to their clan even in the case of being in more than one clan.

From the rules of different clans we see two styles of leadership. Some of the clans have an authoritarian leader but a democratic leadership style is not uncommon. The clans with a hierarchical structure also have special ranks for members. This becomes apparent when we focus on the recruitment process of clans. Eight of the clans have rules about what players in the clan may recruit new members. Only two clans have no restriction on the recruitment process, but the top priority for those clans is to grow in numbers.

Two clans also have an age restriction where all members must be at least 18 years old to participate in the FPS-related clan activities. Two clans have a monthly membership fee, where one of these clans motivate the fee that the clan is running and maintaining a dedicated server of their own where they play different mods (modifications to existing games) of different games.

### *Conduct*

Conduct is among the top 3 rules of all clans in this study. With conduct we mean rules about what is appropriate conduct towards other clan members and other players in the game. Another aspect of rules that concerns conduct is discrimination. There is a consensus on a zero level tolerance on blunt remarks on gender and ethnicity. The reactions to inappropriate behavior are invariably that when behaving racist or sexist, the player will be kicked from the clan. Two of the clans that seem to be more considerate than the rest of the clans also having policies on how to treat newbies and that being less skilled is not a reason for being met with less respect in the clan.

The rules relating to proper conduct have a strong focus on synchronous interaction (behavior while playing), but five of the clans also have strict rules about conduct on the clan forum with general rules about what content is allowed. These rules regulate offensive material, pornographic content etc.

#### *Cheating*

Cheating is part of the rules of all 10 clans in the study, and what seems to be an overarching theme could be structured as follows:

- The code is the law.
- Cheating is when a player gains an unfair advantage over other players using different exploits, altering the code of the game or running scripts.

Two of the clans actually refer to the “EULA” (End User License Agreement) and the “TOS” (Terms of Service) for information about what is considered cheating, in terms related to using add-ons, scripts or hacking the code. Not unexpectedly all definitions of cheating have been discussed in detail by Consalvo [6], and by Salen and Zimmerman where two of the three rule levels in computer games actually are presented. The rule level missing is “implicit rules”, which is a consequence of our data selection method.

The biggest difference between clans is not a shared definition on cheating, but rather how to sanction transgressions. What in most cases is seen, as the worst cheat is to alter the code or hacking the code of the game, usually with a permanent ban as a result. Other types of behavior that are considered cheating is exploiting known bugs/glitches in the game (map bugs are mentioned as a typical example) and using specific strategies that in some cases may lead to an unfair advantage over other players.

#### *Commitment*

Commitment is one of the aspects that seem to differentiate clans into two main categories: the ambitious, competing clan and the more laidback, casual clan. The most serious clans have pre-scheduled mandatory training sessions where you as a member must have a good reason for not participating. Looking at the casual clan, statements such as: “family first, the clan second” communicate in which order priorities are being made, and it also tells us something about the demographic of players. According to Nick Yee the average player is 26 years old [18], and the statement above seem to confirm that the members and leaders of clans consist of teenagers but also family mothers and fathers.

Some clans also have a requirement of how many hours of game play a member is supposed play weekly in order to hone their skills in the game.

#### *Resources*

Resources are of importance for some of the clans in this study, mostly dependent on the clan’s game of preference. Resources in FPS-game are the in-game resources such as crates for collecting goods, vehicles, and other items that if

monopolized by one player will mean a disadvantage for the rest of the group. Other aspects of the use of resources that could be discussed is covered under section “strategies” since destroying resources for the opposing team in certain games could be part of a winning strategy.

#### *Strategies*

Most strategies are intimately connected to what items/resources are available in the game. Other strategies have a whole different meaning, where the coordination of all players is really important to outsmart the opposing team. Most of the rules about strategy cover topics such as what strategically important objects the group should focus on controlling in the game, or the different roles in the group where, e.g., a medic for obvious reasons has a totally different role than an engineer or a sniper.

It is a bit unclear how sanctions for not following the strategy are being administered. However the clans that mention sanctions at all, the sanctions deal with bad team players by not allowing them to play with that group and eventually kick them out of the clan. Rules about different strategies however are not that common (only 2 clans have a strategy guide available online).

#### *Griefing*

Griefing is being addressed both in terms of improper behavior and as a special rule in 3 of the clans. What seems to be the difference is that if mentioned at all (only 3 clans address griefing as something particularly distressful) there is a problem with distinctions. Griefing in some cases addresses behavior as intentional “TK” (Team kill) and “TD” (an abbreviation for team down where one player single handedly takes out the entire opposing team). Killing a teammate intentionally is considered grief play and constitute a special example of griefing, since most instances of grief play that have been mentioned in literature focus on griefing as an act between players on different teams and in this case both players are on the same team. The best way of describing intentional team kill is that it would be an example of “Power imposition” as described by Foo and Koivisto [7].

Single handedly taking out the entire opposing team could be interpreted as a display of skill but as seen in the example above it might also reflect on a distressful situation for other players not being able to contribute to the victory of the team. The definitions and interpretations are therefore unclear about what is considered griefing. It becomes a bit clearer when we look at the sanctions regarding “TK” and “TD”. In the case of a “TK” being intentional beyond speculation that particular clan member will be kicked from the clan, but in other cases where the degree of intentionality is unclear, the clans that discuss these issues focus on the epilogue of that action, if the player committing the act apologizes and is aware of his/her behavior, it can reflect positively on the outcome of what sanction will be used. This seems to be a part of the code of conduct, if you are being polite and acknowledge

your mistakes; the group is not that prone on sanctioning the act in itself unless the act being repeated frequently.

### **Comments on the FPS Clan rules**

In appendix 1, a breakdown of the categories from the FPS-clans is presented with examples of the subcategories that have been used to come up with the categories. The column with sanctions has been marked with an “X” in the column “kicked” and/or “warning” to mark occurrences in the sanctions for the respective rule. In the case of a repeated behavior (such as in the case of not wearing a clan-tag), where the player will receive warnings to some point and eventually be kicked, the “warning”- column is marked with an “(X)”.

In cases where both the “kicked”-column and “warning”-column is marked with an “X” there is no uniform way of treating these transgressions and the act will be evaluated to judge what sanction is suitable. There are also categories that do not have any sanctions associated with them; these categories are rules that are not conditional, in the sense that transgressions are possible. The trial period is something that happens before you are actually part of the clan, and the same thing goes for the age restriction.

### **MMOG Guild rules**

Most guilds have structured their rule set in ways similar to the clans in this article. Thus we will present our analysis for the MMOG guild rules following the same structure as with the clan rules. Most guilds seem to have a much more extensive set of rules, perhaps due to the fact that MMOGs are broader in terms of gaming elements and interaction.

#### *The Group*

There are many types of guilds in MMOGs where raiding guilds, casual guilds, and role-playing guilds (RPG) are the most common. In this article 5 out of 20 guilds where RPG-guilds and the distribution between casual guilds and raiding guilds was fairly even. For many guilds (13 out of 20) it is important that their members are “ambassadors for the guild” (again this is an example of word-for-word description taken from the rules of above mentioned guilds) and act in a way that does not reflect badly on the guild. Loyalty towards the own guild is not as frequently mentioned as Trust/responsibility towards fellow guild members, but 4 guilds emphasize both of these traits among their members, and they are usually mentioned in the same context.

10 guilds have rules about the skill level of players applying for the guild (prerequisite in appendix 1), and 7 of these guilds also apply a trial period for all applicants, to see if they will be accepted as members of the guild. The trial period is motivated as a way of testing the skill level of the applicant and probably more importantly to see if applicant fits the group socially.

Age restrictions on members are mentioned in the rules of 9 guilds.

#### *Conduct*

Eighteen guilds have rules on being respectful to all other players in the game. Fifteen of these 18 guilds have explicitly called this part of their rule set “code of conduct”.

The two exceptions are interesting if we choose to look at their definition and interpretation of the rules. The first exception is a RPG-guild where a player is supposed to “stay in character” and that means acting in a way that is “true” to the story of the members of the guild and the history of that character. The code of conduct in that particular guild has a focus on the player being a good storyteller, as long as the conduct is motivated by the story, anything goes. The second exception is a casual guild consisting of a group of old friends, where rules are meant to be broken. This guild perceives the gaming world of their preference, to put it bluntly as “just” a game world, and those who do not approve of their anarchistic approach to rules and conventions are considered to be taking the game far too seriously. Ten of the guilds have rules against any type of discrimination, where transgressions against these rules in a majority of cases will be sanctioned through an instant kick from the guild. There is a consensus on a zero level tolerance on blunt remarks on gender and ethnicity. Other rules about conduct have a focus on keeping the drama to a minimum in the guild forum and that foul language is something that is best avoided. These transgressions are most likely to be sanctioned through warnings.

#### *Cheating*

Rules about cheating if mentioned are directed towards the EULA and TOS of that particular game or are covered under the “Resources” and “Griefing”-categories of this paper.

#### *Commitment*

Eleven of the guilds have rules about the level of commitment necessary to be part of that particular guild and seven of the twenty guilds have scheduled activities where some of these activities are mandatory for all guild members. It is far more common for raiding guilds to have scheduled activities than any of the other categories of guilds and these activities are targeted at raiding activities. Almost all guilds (15 out of 20) however have rules about being inactive, and a player that has not been logged into the game for a longer period of time will eventually be kicked from the guild.

Transgression to these rules will in most cases be sanctioned with warnings or being ostracized from that activity. Sanctions in its severest form (when the transgression appears repeatedly) will lead to that guild member being kicked from the guild.

#### *Resources*

There is a strong emphasis on how to distribute the in-game resources of most guilds. Raiding guilds are the type of guilds where rules about resources are more a rule than an exception. It is common that guilds use a distribution

system with a “currency” called DKP (short for dragon killing points) to buy items out of the guild vault (a kind of bank for the guild). Some of the equipment (weapons, armor etc) that can be found as drop from different NPCs (Non player characters) has special features such as “bind on equip” meaning that piece of equipment is useless for other players if it has been equipped by a player. Other equipment “binds on pick up” and this is important for the process of distributing equipment in the group, where the item automatically by being picked up by a player is bound to that player. WoW has mechanisms to solve these problem such as having players role a die to distribute the loot from NPCs, or the players can choose between “Need or greed” to signal if an item is needed or if it will be sold instantly, etc. Even though the rules about how to distribute loot are straightforward transgression of these rules (usually referred to as ninja looting) is common.

### *Strategies*

The existence of strategies in guilds is almost without exception part of the more result-oriented raiding guilds. There are reasons to believe that strategies in MMOGs are more related to how to defeat a certain NPC in the game, how to survive an instance in the game, or how to survive a quest. However, there is an abundance of strategy guides on the Internet, making specific strategies for the guild less important. 5 guilds have guidelines on how to prepare for a raid and how to help other players. These guilds also have rules that state that attracting the attention of NPCs when in a raid is strictly forbidden unless all members of the raiding group are prepared and have given their approval. Most strategies are not on an instrumental level rather they are recommendations of what preparations are important on a general level.

### *Griefing*

Different definitions of griefing are used by different guilds. The following definition illustrates the general aspects of most guilds and the seriousness of such behavior:

*“Kill stealing, ninja looting, taking advantage of others for personal gain, or any other kind of unethical behavior will NOT be tolerated under ANY circumstances”* [anonymous guild].

Seven guilds have rules about ninja looting but what we can see from the above citation is that guilds may cover the same aspects under their “code of conduct”-section.

### **Comments on the MMOG guild rules**

In table a breakdown of the categories from the MMOG-guilds is presented with examples of the subcategories that have been used to come up with the categories. We use the same system as in appendix 1 to describe how and what sanctions are common for different kinds of transgressions to the rules of that particular guild.

## **DISCUSSION**

### *Similarities and differences between MMOGs and FPS*

There are many similarities between the two genres of games that we have studied, on the other hand many

differences can be seen in appendix 1 as well. Some of the biggest differences in what is considered important rules can vary within the same group (FPS or MMOG). The type of interaction that these two genres facilitate has large consequences for some of the rules but the game being “ONLINE” with many other players is much more important. The shared rules that concern these games are online games focus on respect for other players and a zero tolerance on discrimination and would be an example of preventing “Harassment”.

Previous computer game research has distinguished between instrumental play and social play [16] to address the motivation of the player. Many of the rule sets of the clans in our data have a much more explicit focus on instrumental play than the rule sets of most guilds. The raiding guilds tend to have more instrumental play focus than the other types of guilds but they do not come close to the level of structuring strategies and “instrumentality” of clans.

Some of the differences between the two genres are related to game mechanics, where MMOGs are games typically referred to as games without a fixed ending, whereas the FPS-genre is divided into separate matches. One difference that can be seen as a direct result of the game mechanics is that players of MMOGs cannot change their name as easily between gaming sessions as in the FPS-games where “Scamming or “identity conception” is one of the topics mentioned frequently in the rules. A closely related problem in guilds would be that of players playing with an “alternative character” (ALTs), but the name of that character would be as static as for their main character so that would be an entirely different situation anyway.

Another big difference is how resources are used and how they are being treated in rules of MMOGs and FPS-games. When resources are discussed in clans it is related to how to win the game in terms of controlling resources and would end up in the “strategies”-category. When resources are discussed in guilds it is about the distribution of resources between guild members and the fairness of that distribution, where “greed” is common factor.

The two genres also differ in the sanctioning of rule transgressions. In the case of MMOG guilds, warning are more often used than in FPS clans. Perhaps reasons for this difference lies in motivation, game mechanics and in the “intentionality” behind a rule transgression, whether or not a sanctioning will occur as mentioned by Foo and Koivisto [7].

### *Rules*

As discussed in the background session on rules, we were aiming at a closer analysis of the rules explicitly stated by groups of players. The three levels of rules by Salen and Zimmerman can be applied directly at both MMOGs and FPSs, but with the amount of guild and clan forums with rules created by players it is obvious that there is a specific need for an additional rule category to fix their blind spot for social aspects of game playing

and for the process of creating meaning in a group. Typically there are some rules that are related to a particular game world and would not find its counterpart in any other game, but we can see many common traits between these games. These rules are not defined by the game designer but by the players, yet explicit and not implicit. In that sense they are more like the exogeneous and diegetic rules described by Montala, yet they are not (only) about creating meaning but also about how to keep a group together and give it an identity in terms that could be described with cohesiveness in social psychology[2].

The first level of rules - “Constitutive rules” - which could be argued encompasses bugs and exploits are almost exclusively part of clan rules with one exception.

If we use the second level of rules - “the operational rules” - the “End User License Agreement” and the “Terms Of Service” documents can be seen as a base. Many clans and guilds use the definitions from these documents to point out what is appropriate especially when it comes to running scripts or altering code. There seems to be a consensus between many players and developers about what is considered cheating in terms of altering the code. We can also see a small tendency that clans focus on hacking/altering code and using exploits when they are refereeing to the EULA, while guilds focus on a much more general application of these rules that could be described as what is permissible in the “spirit of the game”.

The third level of rules “implicit rules” are in a way problematic and is perhaps the sole reason behind a need for player-created rules. The gap mentioned above is perhaps part of the need for an interpretation of what is fair play. The rules created by players are therefore to be considered implicit rules that needed to be made explicit. Only one guild treated rules as “meant to be broken” and even though a rare opinion in this article, the same kind of ideas have been studied before: “The clans of the griefers develop their own identities and distinctive norms against that of the mainstream gaming community” [9].

Since online worlds are social spaces with lots of room for interaction, player-created rules are needed to structure the cooperation in clans and guilds.

#### **Grief play**

The definition of grief play seems to be interpreted in different ways in the rule sets we analyzed compared to the literature. In addition to the categories of grief play as defined by Foo and Koivisto [7] our suggestion is to differentiate between intra-group grief play and inter-group grief play. The reason is that generally speaking, clans talk about intra-group grief-play in their rules, where the effects of the grieving activities are targeted at the own group. Two examples discussed above are Team Kill and Team down. Since FPS-games are targeted at winning over an opposing team, the inter-group grief-play is part of the game objectives. Some clans would consider camping as cheating

or grief play, but we would rather call that kind of in-game behavior as a “local norm violation” [14] or better as “Area monopolizing” [7].

MMOGs have rules about intra-group grief-play as well but they all fall under the category of “Ninja” behavior, or more specific “Ninja Looting”. There is however lots of room for inter-group grief-play in most MMOGs if you are playing on a Player vs. Player server, since most MMOGs have a faction system where all players are part of one faction. Most guilds are similar to the clans in that sense that they have rules for coordinating the intra-group behavior and not the inter-group behavior.

#### **Future work**

Our future work will include a complementary study with more focus on individual players, and a more extensive data collection. Further to this we need to see how different kinds of grieving will change the norm typology that is part of the overarching theme for our research. Finally we want to compare the between-game rule sets and sanctioning with the in-game rule sets and sanctioning.

#### ***The 10 commandments of Online Games***

Thou shall treat others the same way thou like to be treated

Thou shall play fairly and just

Thou shall show respect to fellow players

Thou shall watch thy tongue and speak fairly

Thou shall play as a part of team

Thou shall be loyal to thy group

Thou shall not steal thy co-players treasures

Thou shall not sail under false flag

Thou shall not weep or cry

Thou shall be merry

#### ***And then some....***

Thou shall obey thy Leader

Thou shall obey the rules

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**Appendix 1 Overview of data analysis results**

Category	MMOG			FPS		
	#	Sanctions		#	Sanctions	
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>Kicked</b>	<b>Warning</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Kicked</b>	<b>Warning</b>
<b>1 Group</b>	20			10		
Guild Tabard	2		(X)			
Trust/ Responsibility	12	X	X			
Clan-tag				5	X	X
Double claning				3	X	(X)
Loyalty	6	X		6	X	X
Recruitment	3	X	X	8	X	X
Membership prerequisite	10			2		
Trial period	7			2		
Age restriction	9			2		
<b>2 Code of conduct</b>	15			10		
Discrimination	10	X	X	9	X	
Newbies	5		X	2		X
Forum conduct	7	X	X	5	X	(X)
In-game conduct	12	X	X	9	X	X
No drama	10		X			
Language	14		X			
<b>3 Cheating</b>	8			10		
Eula and ToS	7	X		2	X	
Altering code/ scripts				8	X	
Exploits/bugs	1	X		6	X	
<b>4 Commitment</b>	11			6		
Scheduled activities	7	X	X	6	X	
Be active	11	X	X			
<b>5 Resources</b>	8			5		X
Need/greed	5	X				
Begging	5	X	(X)			
<b>6 Strategies</b>	5			2	X	X
Preparation	5	X	(X)			
Pulling	4	X	(X)			
<b>7 Griefing</b>	7			3		
Ninja looting	7	X				
TK				3	X	(X)
TD				2	X	X