

# Leaving a Never-Ending Game: Quitting MMORPGs and Online Gaming Addiction

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## ABSTRACT

Online game addiction has a negative image and is becoming a public concern in Taiwan. We look at this phenomenon from another perspective, through interviews with gamers who were addicted to a MMORPG but have quit playing, we believe that the multiple reasons causing gamers to leave their game can reflect some more aspects of online game addiction. We then map out how a gamer's attachment to a game changes over time due to many factors, stressing the importance of dynamic quitting and addiction patterns to better understand the addicted gamer's game experience over time. Lastly, we observed self-consciousness in these addicted players as they self-monitored and sought help in many ways to quit a game. We hope this study will be useful for researchers who are trying to better understand online game addiction.

## Author Keywords

addiction, attachment, MMOGs online gaming

## INTRODUCTION

As the popularity of online gaming has grown in Taiwan, so has concern over game addiction. Local and national media outlets frequently report on the negative consequences of excessive online game playing, including questionable stories about addicted gamers who die from exhaustion after long hours of continuous playing.

Some of the more in-depth stories note that massive multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs) differ from single-player games in that they do not have rigid goals or specific playing strategies, nor do they have clear beginnings or endings. Thus, deciding when to quit is up to the individual gamer. Part of the addictive quality of these games is the fact that gamers can play forever if they are willing to give up other aspects of their lives. But despite

media stories and the concerns of parents, gamer addictions to MMORPGs do fade and players do leave. In this paper we will discuss reasons why strongly addicted gamers stop being attached to MMORPGs and factors behind their decisions to leave these seemingly never-ending games. We will test our hypothesis that the multiple reasons behind leaving reflect the reasons why players become addicted. To do so, we will try to look at gamer decisions and insights over time rather than focus on single moments of decision-making.

## BACKGROUND

According to our search of the current literature, ours is the first attempt to understand why gamers overcome their addictions to MMORPGs. When we performed specific searches for current studies related to game addiction (online games in particular), we found a number of efforts to understand Internet and/or video game addiction in terms of the following:

1. Defining game addiction. After describing Internet addiction as a clinical disorder, Young developed eight diagnostic criteria based on gambling addiction criteria [15]. In practice, clinics and hospitals are still in the process of defining Internet addiction symptoms—for instance, the inability to stop the activity to the point of neglecting family or friends [5]. A consensus has yet to be achieved among researchers, therefore criteria have yet to be accepted by the body that publishes *DSM-IV* (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*). A number of researchers argue that criteria for pathological gambling disorders are not suitable for examining pathological computer behaviors [2].
2. Personality types that are more likely to become addicted to games. Some researchers are exploring personality

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variables among computer game addicts [8] and Internet addicts [1]. Those who believe that age is an important factor are concentrating on adolescents and children [6,13].

3. Causative factors. Several reports in the mass media are about parental efforts to sue game companies for developing addictive games [12], assuming the game itself is the major cause of addiction. Yet, some academic researchers are working on identifying links between the structural characteristics of games and gamer motives, based on the assumption that certain structural characteristics are more important than others in terms of inducing interest in games or extending that interest [4].

As part of their attempt to identify factors that contribute to excessive online gaming, some concluded that the games' social aspects are particularly attractive. They note that high usage time and preference to spend more time with in-game than real-life friends does not necessarily make an addict of a gamer [11]. Furthermore, others emphasize that the competitive and cooperative aspects of online games make them more addictive than console games [7].

Instead of searching for major causes of addiction, Yee has focused on understanding two factors that influence gamers to play obsessively: attraction (e.g., online reward cycles, relationship networks, the immersive nature of virtual environments) and motivation (e.g., offline pressure or problems that lead players to use games as an outlet). Yee believes that both factors work simultaneously to create a sense of addiction [14].

4. Effects and consequences of game addiction. As the popularity of gaming has grown, potential effects such as violent tendencies and poor social skill development have become public concerns. Young observes that Internet addiction can lead to such negative consequences as psychological manipulation, victimization, and student and employee Internet abuse. She suggests that health clinics and counseling centers need to design and offer recovery programs for addicts [16]. Other researchers note that children and teenagers with video game addictions are more likely to express hostile feelings and to suffer from poor academic performance [3, 9].

Many media portrayals and research studies of online game addiction take the addicted gamers as people who have socializing problems in real life, or victims, who have lost control of themselves, and are in need of help from others. The voices of the gamers seem to be neglected, as the gamers are treated only as helpless patients.

In summary, most academic researchers of game addiction use a psychological perspective, which looks at the issue from a more micro perspective to study gamer personalities and motivations. They are just beginning to remove the bias seen the mass media (i.e., looking at online game-playing behavior as one aspect of Internet use and game addiction as a type of computer addiction) to study the topic of gaming qualities or "gameness." Furthermore, researchers are only beginning to look at the dynamic features of gaming addictions over time.

## RESEARCH METHODS

Our primary data source was individual interviews with twelve gamers who perceived themselves as "addicted to a MMORPG sometime in the past, but no longer addicted to that game or have stopped playing altogether." Snowball sampling was used to identify potential interviewees. Open-ended questions on individual MMORPG gaming histories were used in an attempt to gain insights into the dynamic changes that occurred over the interviewees' gaming experiences.

All participants were between the ages of 21 and 30 and all had at least an undergraduate degree. Due to these significant similarities, we attempted to broaden our data with information culled from articles and messages posted on game-related discussion boards in *PTT* (Taiwan's largest Bulletin Board System) and the country's largest game discussions forum- *Bahamut*, and *Yahoo/Kimo Knowledge* website. We focused our attention on comments posted by gamers who described their own addictions to MMORPGs—for example, how they felt after they stopped playing and advice on how to quit.

Other than the two primary methods above, we've also tried to draw out a chart of a gamer's subjective levels of attachment to MMORPGs from his own account of his gaming experience. An example of the chart for one participant (Shen) is presented as Figure 1 in the next section. The chart was shown to the gamer, and revised as he saw it fit.

In the absence of clear and universally accepted definitions for "game addiction" or "online game addiction," we allowed our interviewees to define their own addictions to MMORPGs or to explain what they felt to be symptoms. According to our interview transcripts, the most commonly mentioned criterion was spending too much time on gameplay—for example, "*I set my alarm clock to 8 a.m. so I can get up early to play, play all day and night until 1 or 2 a.m., go to sleep, and get up at 8 the next morning to continue playing.*" Other criteria frequently mentioned were thinking about games while they weren't playing (e.g., "*Sometimes I felt as though I was 'logged out' of real life*"); sacrificing life quality or other social activities (e.g., "*I didn't want to eat outside the house. I wanted to use every moment I could to play, so when I was hungry, I would run to the nearest cafeteria for a lunch box to go, and ask that it be fixed quickly*"); and effects on health (e.g., "*My sleeping hours were affected and my eyesight worsened*").

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Our primary findings were:

1. Multiple factors influence gamers to quit playing MMORPGs, and those factors tend to reflect the reasons why gamers became addicted to those MMORPGs.
2. MMORPG quitting patterns are also diverse. A gamer's dynamic relationship with a MMORPG from the period of addiction to time of quitting indicate that multiple factors influencing gamer decisions are intertwined (working

simultaneously or at different times) when leading to a final decision to leave a game.

3. During the period of addiction, gamers are continuously conscious of the effects of their excessive playing and are aware of social expectations from important people in their lives. Sometimes negotiating with the self on how strong their attachment to the game should be, or monitoring the self in case gameplay gets out of control.

### Multiple Causes for Leaving MMORPGs

Reasons given by the interviewed gamers and ex-gamers to abandon MMORPGs can be divided into three categories:

#### *Immersion in a virtual environment*

Tung (age 26) left the game of *Fairyland* in part because of in-game economic inflation, meaning that she did not have enough virtual money to exchange for monthly prepaid cards from other gamers. Her character was poor, but the game made it possible for her to earn virtual cash by capturing bugs and selling them. She remembers capturing bugs with her sister all day long, leading to a self-description as having a “must capture bugs or die” disease. She ranked in the top ten players on her server for number of captured bugs, which allowed her to play for free by trading bug points for real-world pre-paid game cards. Another interviewee named Wu (age 29), expressed the same behavior by killing monsters for hours on end in an attempt to amass a large quantity of useful equipment. A 26-year-old interviewee named Lian enjoyed collecting adornments for her to wear and for others to admire:

*In Ragnarok (RO) there are many quests through which you can collect lots of material for making accessories. For example, you have to collect 999 fox tails to make a cute fox tail hat, or hit 2,000 to 3,000 penguins to earn a penguin hat ... Yeah, it feels like showing off when I wear them.*

Wang (age 28), Shen (age 21), and Lian all complained about the large numbers of Bots appearing in the games they played, claiming that they were unfair and destroyed game ecologies. Whereas they needed to spend a month or more to achieve a certain level, it only took the Bots one week to reach the same level. Even worse, Bots occasionally occupied the popular raiding areas. Wang told us: “*Every time we headed out on a raid we saw Bots already occupying the spot, so we could only leave, snatch the mobs the Bots were fighting, or try to get rid of the Bots. It was really annoying.*”

A 24-year-old interviewee named Liu told us that he left a MMORPG because he had trouble achieving new levels: “*I had to sit and wait for my character to recover after killing very few mobs ... I could play for an entire day and only earn a few experience points.*” He left another game because it had not offered new, updated versions in a long time.

These reasons for leaving MMORPGs are tied to the effort required to reach expected goals, changes in game environments players do not like, or a lack of excitement or pleasure from repetitive playing of an old version that has

not been updated for too long. Especially in Tung’s case, it is possible to see how factors directly tied to gameplay create addictions. These comments also serve as evidence of the attachment that some gamers have an enjoyable experience when interacting with online games. As part of this pleasure, they take comfort in manageable rules and predictable reward cycles.

Yang (age 23) told us that she sadly left a MMORPG that she really enjoyed after her account was hacked and looted for the third time. She complained about having all of the good equipment and money she earned vanish in an instant. We thought it was interesting that she waited until the third time to leave, but Shen explained to us that “*close friends and guild members often raise funds or donate equipment to gamers who have their possessions stolen*”. However, he added that if it happens more than once, the victim “*may feel disappointed with the game and embarrassed about people helping him, and therefore simply leave the game.*”

This explanation underscores another strong reason why players become engrossed in virtual environments and game structures—that is, in addition to interacting with other gamers in designed worlds, they have many opportunities to interact with each other in ways that cross the line between real and game worlds.

#### *Social networks*

Gao (age 27) assumed the role of a cute female character and earned a reputation as a kind-hearted girl. He enjoyed his popularity online, but realized that he could not join in his guild’s offline gatherings, since “boy-girl” characters carry a stigma in online communities. He eventually made up a story that he could no longer play because he was severely ill.

Han (age 26) was the *Main Tank* (MT) of a large *World of Warcraft* guild that suffered from frequent disputes between members as the size of the guild grew. He had to spend a great deal of time and energy reconciling disputes during a period when he was writing a research thesis. Despite his frustrations, he continued to hold his position. It wasn’t until some of his best friends left the game that he suddenly realized what he referred to as the “*lightness of our presence.*” He suddenly felt that logging on was a heavy social burden instead of pleasure, and quickly lost his sense of addiction. However, he felt responsible enough to spend one full month training a replacement before giving up his account and leaving the game. Furthermore, six months later he returned because his younger brother wanted to learn how to play. This time he carefully chose an occupation best suited for individual play, refused to join a guild, and only played casually.

Many interviewees emphasized the fun of playing together with other gamers. Since MMORPGs allow co-playing between gamers of different genders and various ages and backgrounds, gamers meet people they usually don’t interact with in real life. For some games, interacting with different types of people is a fascinating experience. Lee (age 27) told us, “*MMORPGs aren’t dull because you can*

*meet different people. You know, I still remember the first person who killed me in the game! I still remember his name!”*

Many MMORPGs are designed so that gamers must cooperate in order to achieve goals. Consequently, gamers with characters who have occupations that are functionally important to group play and who have good social skills will always feel welcomed and needed by their social networks of friends and guild members. Wang said that he liked grouping with his guild members every night “*to go to different places to fight monsters and chat the whole time.*”

After accumulating many good memories with other gamers, tight bonds within a social network gives some gamers a sense of belonging and responsibility that they don’t feel in their offline lives. But there can be another side to this sense of belonging as it becomes a social burden. Tung admitted,

*A few times I wanted to quit the game because of pressure from my academic studies, but every time I left, I soon went back ... It was because of the people. I had friends there. I wanted to know how they were doing and to keep in touch with them, so I had to go back.*

It is also important to note that gamers often introduce members of their offline social networks to game worlds, in part due to the trust that already exists among them (useful for performing quests and raids) [10], or simply because it’s fun to play with others in the same physical space.

#### *Gameplay is situated in real-life social contexts*

Wu had never played a MMORPG before she started working at a computer store. During her first week on the job, the store manager gave her a *Lineage* account so she could play with her co-workers. Every day at work they would log on and play together, getting to the point where they could perform complex quests such as castle sieges. She liked the game so much that she played for hours late at night at home. However, after she left the job her sense of satisfaction from playing was challenged by disapproval and reprimands from members of her family. For instance,

*Sometimes at midnight, my mom would walk pass my door, stop to look at me, shake her head, and sigh. I stated thinking to myself, ‘I shouldn’t play anymore.’ I felt as though it was wrong to be playing because everyone in my family treated me like that. Everyone seemed to ... disapprove of my playing. Everyone around me disliked it. They thought it was a waste of time.”*

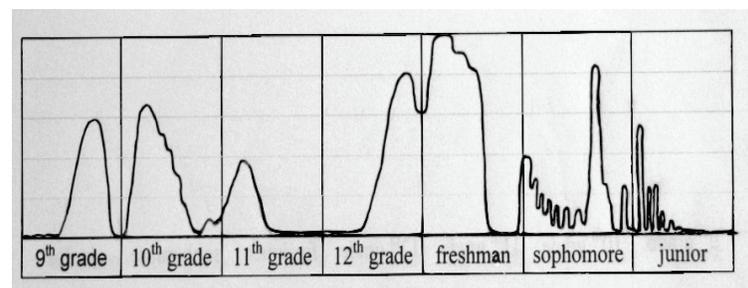
For Yang, the pressure came from peers and not from family. As a college student she lived in a girls’ dormitory. She frequently played through the night, but was constantly asked by her roommates to “*play quieter*” or to go to sleep earlier. She felt guilty about disturbing her roommates, while envying her male classmates: “*They get to play crazily and nobody can tell them to stop playing ... and I think boys aren’t easily woken by noises unless they are very loud.*”

Wang said his addiction to *Lineage II* began at a time when he left his job to take care of his ailing father at home, cooking all of his father’s meals and monitoring his chronic disease. Since Wang had to stay home almost all of the time, logging on became a fixture of his daily routine. Soon everything that happened during games became very important to him and triggered strong emotions. After his father passed away he found a job, logged on for fewer hours, and finally stopped playing after several months.

In summary, online gaming worlds are situated in different real-life social contexts. Jobs, the attitudes of people considered important in gamers’ lives, spaces where games are played, and daily routines and lifestyles are all on the list of factors that influence how much satisfaction a player derives from a MMORPG. When they shift into new social contexts, their sense of game immersion may be affected, along with their perceived level of addiction.

#### **Shen’s Changing Relationship with a MMORPG**

In this section we will use a single example—Shen—to illustrate how multiple factors tend to influence changes between gamer and game over time. We’ve also drew out a chart of his subjective levels of attachment to MMORPGs from his own account of his gaming experience. The chart was shown to him and revised. By drawing this chart, we wish to clearly show how his attachment to MMORPGs has changed dramatically over time.



**Figure 1:** Shen’s subjective levels of attachment to MMORPGs over time.

Shen began participating in his first MMORPG during his last year in junior high school, but his obsession was not so strong that he couldn’t put aside playing for a few months in order to prepare for his high school entrance exam. He didn’t return to gaming until some of his senior high school classmates invited him to play, but again he quit after a few months and focused his gaming time on single-player games.

His addiction (to *Lineage II*) started in his last semester of senior high school. He told us that he started playing for several reasons: it was winter break, two of his classmates invited him to play with them, the game graphics were very attractive, and he liked the ideas of grouping with others

and joining a guild. He met a few gamers at a net café who agreed to help him if he wanted to play *Lineage II*. Under their influence, Shen created two characters—an *Artisan* and an *Elven Elder* (healer)—because his net café friends needed those occupations. He enjoyed the sense of being needed by others:

*We could group together to play, so they didn't have to look for another healer. At that time my Elven Elder character's occupation was needed by many groups. I was proud of my skills. People who I grouped with asked me to group with them again, so I could easily find groups to join and got to make many new friends, some of whom I still keep in contact with.*

His addiction grew over a three-month period, during which he joined a guild and established stable online friendships. Shen told us that the teachers at his public high school were not very demanding regarding his college entrance exam; his parents, who were busy with their respective jobs, believed that their son was at school studying for the exam. Instead, he spent long afternoon and evening hours at a net café playing *Lineage II*. He said that in class,

*I couldn't hear what the teacher was saying because all I could think about was the game. Where I was going to go that day. Wondering if there would be any activities that night, or if I were going to learn some new skills.*

After the entrance exam he bought a new computer so he could play at home. But he also had to work at a part-time job and had no good excuses for leaving his home to spend time at the net café, therefore he was forced to play for shorter hours and to postpone his game time until late at night so he wouldn't be criticized by his parents.

During his freshmen year in college he moved into an apartment with two friends and returned to playing long hours. But soon he and his online friends were deliberately killed by a *silver ranger* (archer). In his anger he decided to create his own archer character to take revenge. But he quickly grew bored when he realized that archers usually play separate from groups, and lost more interest in his character when an updated version of the game reduced the advantages of archers. He eventually went back to his role as healer.

Shen recalled that at the end of his first freshman semester, his class started holding nightly practices for a cheering-section tournament. The practices were physically exhausting, yet he still logged on to the game the moment he got back to his apartment:

*I would go out with a group to fight monsters but fall asleep in front of the computer. I felt bad about that and sorry for the people who grouped with me, since it's dangerous for a group to be without a healer. But I just couldn't help it, I was too tired.*

At the end of that semester he suffered two catastrophes that he recognized as opportunities for him to stop playing: his hard drive crashed and he received a terrible report card:

*I felt I was too addicted to the game. I felt tired every day. It was a vicious cycle, I would play past midnight and feel drowsy the next day ... I decided I should just quit playing for a while, take a break.*

He consciously decided to put his computer aside and wait for it to be repaired until summer. When he did return to the game he discovered that his friends were at levels far beyond his. Some friends invited him to join their raids, but he felt he wasn't helpful to the group:

*My level was too low, and I couldn't do any damage or heal enough. I felt like a burden, to them ... I didn't want to be redundant to the group, earning experience points for no effort ... so I began to group with strangers every night.*

Shen quickly realized that playing with strangers had a major disadvantage: a lot of time was spent forming a group with all of the required occupations, therefore playing time became very inefficient. He quickly grew tired of waiting for a long time every evening in order to kill just a few monsters:

*I didn't have a stable group of friends to play with online, so it wasn't necessary for me to play every day. Sometimes I only logged on to chat with friends, help them do quests, or tell them what I had read in game magazines.*

During winter break in his sophomore year, Shen applied for a position playing on a beta server prior to the formal release of an updated game version. He had great fun playing as a level 75 character, exploring new places and trying out new skills. But once the beta testing was completed, he faced the same problems he had dealt with before. Also during this time, some friends left the game due to their accounts being hacked and looted or offline responsibilities, which left him with fewer online friends. When his next monthly pay period expired, he told his guild leader that he wanted to take a break.

For a short period of time he tried playing various free-to-play games, but ended up quickly jumping from one game to another because *"I couldn't find the good feeling I had when I played Lineage II. I wasn't addicted anymore. It was more like playing single-player games just to kill time."* When he decided to return to *Lineage II* his account password was blocked. Since he was unwilling to fax his personal identification documents to the company, he had no choice but to leave the game for good. Since then his online activities have mostly been reading Internet novels or game magazines. He told us, *"Life without online games just feels ordinary, very plain. That's all I can say, plain."*

Shen's story underscores the idea that MMORPG addictions are generally influenced by many factors, including game and system design, interactions with other gamers, and social context. Moreover, the process does not consist of a simple linear passage from enjoyment to obsession, addiction, and quitting. Accordingly, dynamic relationships between gamers and MMORPGs must be examined in greater detail in order to better understand their addictions and decisions to leave their favorite games.

### “What am I doing?”

Game addiction researchers have tended to describe gamers as passive victims who aren't aware of their addiction and who need help from others to recover. They are also occasionally portrayed as angry, anxious, unable to control their own wills or actions, and at a loss about how to respond to their addictions. However, Shen's story illustrates how gaming addictions are influenced by multiple, intertwined factors, with the addict frequently aware that something is wrong and needs to be addressed. When he eventually realized that his addiction was getting out of hand, he seized the opportunity presented by his malfunctioning computer to regain some control over his gaming habits.

Our other interviewees also provided evidence that most gamers are aware to different degrees about changes in their attitudes toward and pleasure from online gaming, and can elucidate those aspects of gaming that they enjoy the most. They frequently monitor their relationships with a game and occasionally seek advice from other gamers if their actions appear to be getting out of control. The gamers and ex-gamers we spoke with said they were often aware of how their gaming habits had affected other aspects of their lives, which they were willing to sacrifice (or at least postpone or otherwise set aside) in order to play MMORPGs. When describing her willingness to play all night long, Yang said, *“I knew it was abnormal.”* Liu reported that at the height of his addiction, *“time went by very fast ... but when my statistics grade came out, I felt like crying.”*

Our interviewees were also clearly aware of social expectations from their peers and families, and of how playing MMORPGs was viewed by those around them as negative behavior. These expectations and stigmatizations were apparently internalized to the degree that the gamers we met sooner or later addressed issues tied to self-constraint. We observed that game forums contained many posts by gamers looking for support for their decisions to remove themselves from gaming. Often these posters mentioned that they were about to make a significant transition in some other aspect of their lives—graduation from school, a new job, marriage, parenthood—and admitted an awareness that they should stop playing. One gamer wrote, *“I'm almost 30. It's time I carry the burden of my family, so I shouldn't play anymore.”*

For Yang the prime motivation to quit was graduation from college. She told us that she had spent some time looking back at her undergraduate years and realized that she could have played less and experienced more. So even though she rented an apartment by herself after graduation—a space in which she would not bother anyone by playing late at night—she chose to stop playing.

Moreover, being self-conscious of how excessive online gaming had impacted their lives or recognizing social expectations, many of them questioned their relationships with MMORPGs. Lee said she sometimes doubted her game experiences with thoughts such as *“Why did I spend the whole night trying to hide from this stupid spider?”*

From our interviews we learned that some gamers go through a self-questioning process after they initially notice their addiction. When struggling to control or simply monitor these addictions through self-discipline, some gamers are willing to actively search for advice from other gamers. When they learn that others have succeeded in stopping on their own, the addicted gamers feel support during their decision-making processes. Responses to direct requests for advice posted on game forums or websites can be categorized in at least four groups:

1. Do other things. Suggestions we read included falling in love, joining a club, finding a time-consuming job, purposefully going out with friends, and playing other games—especially free-to-play games with enforced time limitations.
2. Remember the difference between real and virtual worlds. In one post an advice-giver reminded his gaming peers, *“By the time you turn off your computer, most of the things that you had in the game are gone.”* Another suggestion is to acknowledge and reject the need to achieve all of your game goals. If you think it will be hard to give up your gaming friends, ask for their email or instant messenger addresses and use them to forge new types of connections.
3. Eliminate game access—the “cold turkey” option. Suggestions in this area included selling your computer, *“closing your eyes and deleting the game,”* and *“getting drunk and deleting your character.”*
4. Welcome catastrophes and take advantage of them. Let your account be hacked and looted so that all of your money and equipment disappears.

What is very interesting and worth noticing about these postings is that while they give advice or tell about their own ways, they seem to have paralyzed the self, treating the addicted self as a patient, and examine what's going on to the self. During the process, sometimes the mind of the gamer seemed to be spitted, while a part of him/her desires to play on, the other part keeps guardian over him/her and tells him/her to stop playing. Moreover, sometimes even hoping to be victimized by catastrophes, such as account being hacked and looted, computer being damaged, or accidentally deleted their character. This way they would not have to struggle anymore, and have no choice but to quit playing.

The atmosphere in game forums is not the equivalent of joining a recovery program or accepting therapy, since they do not include primary advisors to point addicted gamers in the right direction. Instead, these forums provide spaces for sharing feelings with other gamers who have been through similar doubts and struggles, and who are therefore better prepared to understand feelings of addiction. Gamers feel safe in expressing their doubts on these forums, since they are reasonably assured that they will not be stigmatized, treated with hostility, or accused of not being able to control themselves. Still, the most important aspect of these gamers deliberately asking for advice from their online peers is that

the act affirms their desire to be in control of their addictions.

### CONCLUSION

The scope of this paper prevented us from uncovering all possible aspects of and factors tied to gaming addiction. However, it was our goal in this preliminary study to emphasize two points: game addiction issues should not be viewed as one-dimensional, and diversity among gamers in terms of social contexts and motivations must be acknowledged. In addition, the information we found concerning gamers' changing levels of attachment to an MMORPG over time indicates that addiction is far from the final step in a gamer's relationship to a game. Therefore, it is important to create complete pictures of the addiction phenomenon instead of focusing on fragmented snapshots of gamer experiences.

Finally, we found that gamers are aware of their MMORPG addictions and are generally conscious of the effects of their addictions on other aspects of their lives. However, self-awareness does not equal control of their addictions. We did observe that gamers often try to monitor their conditions and seek help from other gamers when they fear that their actions are out of control. They try to monitor negotiations among multiple inner voices over continuing or stopping in response to life changes.

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