

# Conflict management and leadership communication in multiplayer communities

Marko Siitonen

University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Department of Communication

P.O. Box 35 (ToB)

FI-40014 University of Jyväskylä

marko.siitonen@jyu.fi

## ABSTRACT

Online multiplayer games often promote long-term cooperation between players. The resulting player groups and communities can be harmonious and long-lived, but it is equally possible that they encounter problems in building trust, managing the community effort, or negotiating values and goals. Conflict management, therefore, is important for the functioning and stability of multiplayer communities. This exploratory study looks at leadership communication and conflict management in the context of multiplayer computer games and the groups and communities that operate within them. By looking at players' and player-leaders' perceptions of conflicts and conflict management, a conception of the patterns behind conflicts is formed. In addition, issues of conflict management and leadership communication are discussed.

## Keywords

Conflict management, leadership communication, online multiplayer games

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Conflict in collaborative groups

Starting from the 1990s, a plethora of studies has illustrated the prevalence of social organization within the context of online multiplayer games. Players engage in long-term social interaction within the frame of these games, forming groups, teams and communities in the process. These player organizations typically have a shared goal, and thus include at least some task-related elements. While gaming can be seen as an inherently voluntary activity, previous studies have also pointed out that social organization, structured roles, and even strict hierarchies are not uncommon within multiplayer gaming communities [12, 15, 16].

Cooperation and competition between players constitute an integral part of game design for many a multiplayer online game. While conflicts between guilds or their representatives are typical in competitive settings, it is the

conflicts between players who are trying to cooperate with one another that is the focus of this paper. The purpose of this study is to explore the possible reasons behind conflicts within multiplayer communities, and how communities manage the conflicts they face.

In the context of online multiplayer games, most player organizations can be considered what Stohl and Walker [13] characterize as collaborative groups – that is, they are (typically) trying to reach for a shared goal. According to Stohl and Walker, typical features of collaborative groups are:

- the group has a shared goal that cannot be reached by any group member alone,
- cooperation requires communication between group members (this communication can be face-to-face or computer-mediated),
- cooperation can overstep organizational borders,
- cooperation is not tied to a place or time, and
- the group can also operate as a team, without a formal leader – in such a case leadership is shared.

Multiplayer groups also fulfill the definition of collaborative groups in that they are typically so-called *bona fide groups*, or groups that have formed naturally. This tendency to be self-organized is of particular interest from the point-of view of conflict management, since it means that often there are no outside authorities that the group could fall back on in case of difficulties.

Many online multiplayer games are complex systems by design. What this leads to is that groups and communities operating within such games have to fulfill increasingly complex tasks, often requiring precise coordinated effort. As Hollingshead, McGrath, and O'Connor [7] note in their analysis of group task performance and communication technology, complex tasks typically lead to more interdependent roles within a group, an increased need for

**Breaking New Ground: Innovation in Games, Play, Practice and Theory. Proceedings of DiGRA 2009**

© 2009 Authors & Digital Games Research Association (DiGRA). Personal and educational classroom use of this paper is allowed, commercial use requires specific permission from the author.

well-orchestrated teamwork, as well as reciprocal communication and feedback. In short, the demands on communication and collaboration increase with the complexity of the tasks at hand. It is not surprising, then, that leadership, both formal and emergent, is an integral element of the social organization of many player organizations.

On a general level, differing motivations and approaches to gaming are a common source of conflicts in multiplayer games. A typical example of this kind of conflict potential are so-called *powerplayers* - players who enjoy a competitive and in many ways task-driven approach to gaming, a viewpoint not necessarily understood by other players who have a less competitive approach [14]. Another typical example of varying individual motivations is the existence of cheating in its many forms, an activity that clearly divides the general multiplayer gaming community. Overall, conflicts are not a rarity in the context of multiplayer games. Earlier research has shown that especially in some types of multiplayer games, such as competitively played FPS games, conflict talk can be one of the most common types of talk [18].

The prevalence of conflict in the grand context of multiplayer games does not, however, automatically lead to conflicts being as commonplace within cooperative player organizations. Quite the contrary, one could expect that in order to be able to maintain a productive long-term cooperation, active conflict management strategies would have to be employed.

### 1.2 Leadership rising

With social organization and hierarchy, issues of leadership are quick to rise. Indeed, it seems that one of the key aspects of social interaction within online gaming groups and communities is that of leadership communication. Previous studies on groups and communities operating within online multiplayer games have demonstrated how issues of leadership can be prevalent even in voluntary settings, and that leadership communication can have drastic effects on the operation and social cohesion of online groups [12, 16].

There are several challenges for effective leadership in the context of online multiplayer games. Player organizations are often at least partly dispersed, and typically operate to some extent via computer-mediated communication [12]. In extreme cases this can mean that the members represent different national or other cultures, reside in different time zones, and speak different languages as their mother tongue. Such dispersion does not exclude the possibility of knowing one's gaming partners, though. Indeed, it is fairly typical that people play games with people they know [16]. Still, even partial dispersion can bring with itself great many challenges to communication, similarly to the context of working life and the virtual teams within [5].

Managing an online multiplayer community can be time-consuming and challenging. Reflecting against leadership functions that are typical in teams, one can quickly see that the responsibilities of guild masters can be heavy indeed – from member selection and composition to task design, from performance management to team development, leading a multiplayer community can be a complex task [for a rundown of the functions of team leaders, see e.g. 2]. Many of these functions also include the potential for conflict.

Conflict management can be seen as one function of leadership communication. Here it is important to notice that leadership communication is not limited only to those individuals in leadership position. Rather, conflict management can be a mutual effort, where most anyone can operate as the mediator if needed. Still, it is possible that in highly organized social organizations, such as player guilds, those in a leading position are responsible for much of conflict management.

## 2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

This study looks at leadership communication and conflict management in the context of multiplayer computer games and the groups and communities that operate within them. The purpose of the study is to form an understanding of the role of leadership communication in the process of conflict management in multiplayer communities by looking at players' and player-leaders' experiences and perceptions of conflicts and conflict management. The study aims to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What kind of factors do players recognize behind conflicts in multiplayer communities?

RQ2: How do players and player-leaders manage conflicts when engaged in computer-mediated communication?

Both research questions were approached with the premise that most, or all, of the communication between members of multiplayer communities is computer-mediated.

The approach taken in this paper is qualitative and interpretative. The data analyzed in this study consisted of two sets of themed player interviews.

The first data set included 15 interviews, and was collected as a part of a study with a broader focus on the social dynamics of multiplayer communities [12]. Thirteen of the interviewees were Finnish, and two were from other countries within Europe (Italy and Belgium). Three of those interviewed in this data set were women. The age of the interviewees ranged from 18 to 31 years. Almost all of the interviewees played more than one kind of multiplayer computer game, and all of them had belonged to a group or a community in at least some of the games they played. These interviews followed the format of a typical naturalistic in-depth interview, which meant that they were relatively unstructured and open-ended [6]. The interviews

concentrated on the experience of belonging to multiplayer communities as a whole. Issues of leadership communication and conflict management were a part of the set of themes used to guide the flow of the interviews, and most interviewees also brought the topics up by themselves. When transcribed, the transcripts of the first data set amounted to 304 pages of font-size 12.

The second data set included 6 themed e-mail interviews. The interviewees in this data set all represented players of a team-based multiplayer strategy game. The interviews centered on themes of leadership and leadership communication. The age of the interviewees ranged from 19 to 39 years, and all of them were Finnish men. Altogether the interviews yielded 24 A4-pages of correspondence.

An exploratory data analysis was conducted in the spirit of abductive reasoning. Abductive analysis explores the data from a certain viewpoint and looks at emerging patterns in the data. By revising the initial, tentative formulations throughout the data collection and analyzing process, the researcher tries to find and verify themes and patterns, much in the same way as in inductive analysis. [4, 6]

Through a coding process, a set of central themes was formulated. These were 1) power and decision making, 2) rules and sanctions, 3) patterns behind conflicts, and 4) consequences of conflicts (such as members leaving or the community disbanding).

The results of the analysis are presented over the next two chapters. Chapter 3 discusses the patterns evident behind conflicts. Chapter 4 analyzes issues of conflict management and the possible consequences of unresolved conflicts. Discussion and directions for future research are presented in Chapter 5.

Throughout this paper, excerpts from player interviews have been used to illustrate the topic at hand, and to provide argumentation for the results of the analysis. The excerpts have been modified in several ways. Since most of the interviews were conducted in Finnish, they had to be translated into English by the author of this study. The interviews that were conducted through computer-mediated means have been formatted to resemble spoken interviews where necessary to ensure anonymity. Similarly, the name, age, and gender of the interviewees were omitted. These personal data were replaced with Informant A, Informant B, and so forth.

### **3. PATTERNS BEHIND CONFLICTS**

#### **3.1 Negotiating values and goals**

The interviewees' accounts painted a picture where conflicts within player organizations are not rare. This is not surprising, for when a number of individuals with varying backgrounds, motives, and communication styles come together for a prolonged period of time, conflicts are bound to happen sooner or later. On the other hand, serious

conflicts with possibly detrimental effects for the operation and stability of player groups and communities were seen as something happening relatively rarely.

When looking at the patterns behind the more serious conflicts, the interviewees highlighted the centrality of the process of negotiating the community's values and goals. Also the motivational differences between players were seen as potentially challenging. Furthermore, there were factors such as simple misunderstandings that could be seen as having conflict potential, even though these were generally not seen as serious as the reasons leading back to motivational differences, for example.

According to the data, the dynamics of negotiating goals and values, and translating these into norms and rules, are another common nominator behind conflicts in player organizations. Put simply, a multiplayer community can usually be seen as having an overarching motive or value-structure. Ranging from a relaxed nature and emphasis on "friends having fun" to highly hierarchically structured and task-oriented organization... these sometimes clash with the motives of individual players.

As Siitonen [12] notes, there are usually two levels of norms and rules evident in the social landscape of multiplayer communities. Firstly, there are generally shared norms within the grand context of online multiplayer gaming. Many of these are similar to the norms evident in communication networks as a whole, such as bans on racist remarks or sexual harassment, and avoidance of filling communication channels with spam. There is also behavior that is typically unwanted in most online multiplayer games, such as player killing, stealing, and using scripted macros to give an unfair advantage over other players. Secondly, a multiplayer community can have norms and rules of its own. These can include for example the expected level of commitment to the community effort, reciprocity between community members, or how transgression is punished.

The norms of a multiplayer community can be commonly accepted and acknowledged, but it is likely that within the community there are varying interpretations of what they truly mean. Such differences in interpretation of the norms can be a frequent source of friction, resentment, and even hostility within the community [17].

Conflicts can also be seen as a means for the community to negotiate its underlying values and goals. They can operate as a means through which individual community members negotiate their needs towards the whole community, for example by expressing how they think the community should operate or what it should be like:

"[...] at some point there was a guy in [community's name] who started to complain that: "I have given money to you folks and done this and that and now I want to get into a leadership position". And of course no one took him

seriously, and it's not, it really didn't matter if you were a leader or not. Well, he wanted it anyway, and he gave us a final ultimatum like: "give me leadership or I will resign", and the rest of the members were just like okay, be my guest. Or they tried to keep him there in the beginning, like don't do this, that you can't be serious, lighten up, but it didn't work out, and he left in the end." (Interviewee B)

### 3.2 The motives that separate

Many conflicts in the context of online multiplayer games and the communities within can be labeled as motive conflicts. Therefore, it is important to recognize some of the key motives behind playing...

On a theoretical level, an outside observer can analyze and classify a game system – for example, label it as competitive or based on chance. On the other hand, such an overarching classification does not necessarily describe individual players' approach to the game, and some game systems are simply too complex to yield to straightforward categorization. For example, there can be great variance in players' relation to the game and to the other players in a typical MMOG such as *World of Warcraft*. Adapting Callois' [3] classical classification, players can approach a game from a competitive standpoint (*agon*), embrace the aspect of chance and unpredictability (*alea*), strive for a simulation-like experience (*mimicry*), or seek excitement (*ilinx*).

Several studies have looked at the issue of player motivations specifically from the point-of-view of online multiplayer games. Refining the original four player types presented originally by Richard Bartle [1], Yee's [19] quantitative analysis recognized ten motivational factors that could be grouped into three second-order factors. These factors are 1) achievement, 2) social, and 3) immersion. Siitonen's [12] qualitative analysis presented similar results, where motivations of multiplayer community members could be aligned along three axis: 1) competition, 2) socializing, and 3) interest in a certain game. It has to be noted that such motivational factors do not exclude one another – that is, a player can play one game (or, indeed, one character within one game) from a certain viewpoint, while utilizing another game to fulfil other motivations. In addition, multiple motivational factors can be simultaneously apparent when looking at a group or a community. For example, a group that is trying to reach complex and time-consuming goals might combine social and achievement-related motivations.

#### *Task-orientation versus free play*

In a voluntary setting where players with varying motives come together and form groups and communities aiming for a common goal, several interesting issues regarding communication spring forth. One of these is the dialectic tension between fun and work, freedom and orderliness, autonomy and control. For example, in a task-related

multiplayer community the leader, or leaders, might have to impose strict rules concerning player behavior. These rules might possibly conflict with individual players' notion of "fun", thus causing a conflict of motives within the community members.

The tensions between various viewpoints on "fun", and authority and task-orientation versus unstructured socializing came out in an interesting way in the data. According to some respondents, the element of fun inherent in gaming is negotiable, and should at times be inferior to the aspect of playing as effectively as possible:

"Sometimes you have to railroad decisions through, make others do as you wish, if it seems like it won't work otherwise." (Interviewee N)

"You have to prioritize between enjoyment and the importance of winning. If you want your team to win, effective leadership requires discipline, which surely reduces the enjoyment of some players." (Interviewee L)

This tension between voluntariness and obligation seems to cause general tension in many multiplayer communities, much like in expert organizations in other contexts as well. What this means is that authoritatively presented requests might be shunned, or community members might even actively rebel against them. As one respondent answered the question concerning the possible counter-reaction to authoritative leadership style:

"It depends on several factors. First of all the authority of the leader: if players have joined in knowing that someone will take the reins, it is easier to accept strong leadership. It is also clear that some players are more prone to accept the choices made by the leader than others." (interviewee L)

Another respondent pondered that it is especially those players whose motives are relatively "serious" or task-oriented, and who put the good of the group or the community before their own success, that have the easiest time accepting strong leadership:

"[...] [they] take leadership communication absolutely positively and, if required, can do even truly difficult choices concerning their nation [each player guides one nation in the game], such as donate away good settlements, have their characters killed, lay off troops, etc., which weakens their own nation, but strengthens the coalition." (Interviewee O)

### 3.3 Conflicts between individuals

Coordinating and managing the community effort comprises a significant proportion of all in-game communication. For example, in a survey of 1836 MMOG players conducted by Seay, Jerome, Lee and Kraut [11], 76 percent of the respondents reported communicating for coordination and scheduling of activities, and 58 percent

reported communicating for dealing with guild management issues. Taking into account that the survey was not directed specifically for those in leading positions, as well as the fact that not all respondents reported equal commitment to guild activities, these numbers can be thought of as being relatively high.

In a long-term social organization, the mere presence of multiple individuals with varying backgrounds and goals can lead to conflict. Sometimes these conflicts expand and become known to the larger community system, sometimes they remain mostly between the two parties. The reasons for discord can be as varied as in any other context of human behavior. For example, varying orientations to gaming, envy, and rivalry are typical factors that bring about conflicts between individual players:

”In one community I was once, well, they didn’t dare to tell me that I couldn’t play anymore. It got to the point that there came one guy to replace me, like to suddenly say that ok, you’re out of here. Ok, then the leader of that community wouldn’t tell me why for at least two months. He came up with lies such as that they had spoken with the whole community about me not being a good match. But at the point when I left, I said that ok, see you later, and half of the people came immediately to ask me personally what was the matter, and why I left. People really come up with lies to get rid of you and all that. The next thing was that they claimed that I had not been good enough. I went for fun to check some statistics on shots, because of course they had only looked at frags, and I was number one in most of them. Well, in the end it was clear that the new player just didn’t like me for some reason, and because he was more famous than me I was dumped.” (Interviewee N)

Another typical example of factors leading to conflicts between players is misunderstandings. The context of multiplayer computer games is as prone to misunderstandings as any other. While conflicts originating in misunderstandings are necessarily not as serious as conflicts based on differing values and goals, players are generally aware that there is a risk of a simple misunderstanding escalating into something more serious:

“[...] in these clans you should always be right in a certain way. Because it is very easy to understand people wrong. It is so easy you wouldn’t believe it. That’s why we use the little faces [smileys]. But sometimes they are not enough. Sometimes they think that you have been a bit sarcastic or something like that, and they reply to you in a bad way. Then you reply again in a bad way and then it’s going to come down in flames. Then some other people will come in and join the conversation. So after a while some people actually get banned from the forums, so that you can’t actually post anymore. Of course you can do if you change the nick [online pseudonym]

and join again, but they will see straight away who you are because they remember, they know the way you write. So you have to be careful. You tend to be a bit nicer than you are in real life because you know that you can be misunderstood. Even though you want to say ... you are almost upset, you always have to be less upset (laughs).” (Interviewee F)

The previous excerpt includes an interesting concept of preventing conflict by monitoring one’s behavior. Recognizing conflict potential and attempting to avoid its escalation seems to be one possible avenue for managing conflicts in multiplayer communities. We will proceed to look at this and other possible conflict management strategies in the next chapter.

## **4. MANAGING CONFLICTS IN MULTIPLAYER COMMUNITIES**

### **4.1 Management by avoidance**

There can be a lot at stake when managing conflicts, especially in long-standing multiplayer communities. Players might have spent hundreds or thousands of hours playing the game, accumulating experience and social capital along the way. It is this prospect of having something to lose that enforces compliance to norms and rules, and motivates finding successful conflict management strategies.

While one could argue that the general potential for conflict is high within the context of multiplayer games, actual examples of conflicts within multiplayer communities were hard to find in either data set. The overall impression was that either there were indeed not many conflicts in the interviewees’ communities, or they were too insignificant to remember. One explanation to this is many players’ approach to multiplayer gaming: it may be that when the whole context is voluntary and about having fun, conflicts simply do not arise as often:

”Yeah, we had relatively few problems or fights there, everybody was usually in a good mood when they came to play, and our goals were not set that high. Other than having fun and being together.” (Interviewee H)

Another viewpoint present in the data is that players can actively avoid and reduce conflict, for example through compliance or compromise. Since players seem to generally dislike conflicts in their player organizations, it is only natural that they strive to keep them at bay. Earlier studies have found similar results, where players are even overly polite in an effort to minimize conflict potential. It seems that some players have no problem talking about their families or hobbies, but purposely avoid more adversarial topics such as politics or religion [16].

### **4.1 Leadership and conflict management**

Sometimes a conflict cannot be avoided or pushed to the background, but requires more direct management. This

task of conflict management can be shared. For example, in many larger guilds there are smaller groups of players within the larger player organization. These teams can have leaders of their own, who are effectively responsible for the team's operation and thus also for possible conflict resolution within the team. The community can also engage in a collective attempt to solve conflicts [12]. Overall, though, conflict management seems to be one of the central functions of leadership communication in multiplayer communities.

Many online multiplayer games, especially those with a strong team element to them, can be immensely competitive. According to some respondents, firm leadership is imperative for the functioning of the group in such cases:

"The sheer amount of time that communication takes can be frustrating at times – especially if you have to justify and argue a lot. Ergo: authoritative style is the fastest and most efficient."  
(Interviewee L)

While clear task-orientation might promote the need for strong leadership, the tendency to adopt an authoritative model of leadership and organize themselves hierarchically has been noted in other genres of online games as well, such as MUDs [10] and MMOGs [12]. Interestingly, in a study of the social life of guilds in MMOGs, Williams, Ducheneaut, Xiong, Yee and Nickell found out that the player groups with clear policies and procedures seemed to manage tasks better and to have generally happier members. They also present that in their study "*There was clear evidence that the majority of players wanted a firm leader to enforce norms and policies*" [16].

With regards to conflicts management, however, the benefits of authoritative communication style are not as clear-cut. The conflict management strategies employed by guild leaders are limited by the need to maintain a level of trust and collaboration in the guild. After all, some tactics might alienate people and undermine the basic level of trust required for collaboration. As Holton puts it: "*Like all teams, virtual teams require a solid foundation of mutual trust and collaboration, if they are to function effectively*" [8].

In addition to trust, one should not forget the basic voluntariness behind most player organizations. In the generally voluntary context of online communities it is factors such as the enthusiasm of the community's leaders, and the enjoyability tied to participating in the community effort, that help build and sustain sense of virtual community [9]. This posits great challenges for conflict management – how to manage conflicts and keep the enjoyment high at the same time?

#### **4.3 When all fails – the possible negative consequences of conflicts**

Despite their relative rarity, practically all interviewees did

mention at least some occasions that could be labeled as conflicts, some of which had proven fatal to their multiplayer communities. For example, large differences in members' motives had at times led to the disbanding of the whole community or its division into two smaller multiplayer communities. Earlier research utilizing participant observation has found similar results, where serious conflicts in multiplayer communities can be relatively rare, but potentially destructive [12].

Not all conflicts within multiplayer communities are ever solved in a satisfactory manner to the community members. It is even possible that long-lasting, unsolvable conflicts lead to a slow withering away of the community:

"Well, this is pretty easy because you have not met anyone face-to-face. If there come bad conflicts, either the clan is split in two, or into many parts, or in those cases when there's only one opposing all the others that one person gets kicked out. And the third option is that there comes such a big conflict that no one comes online anymore, and then the clan just withers away and dies. One third of the members are left wondering where all the others are (laughs). I have witnessed one such a case from the side." (Interviewee A)

Conflicts between leaders and the rest of the community seem to be especially potent in their destructive capacity, especially where the conflict remains unresolved and the leader ends up leaving the community. For example, one interviewee painted an uncompromising, yet typical picture of such an incident:

"Usually that's the end of it then. But you do see those cases where the leader leaves and someone else steps out of the line and continues from there. Sometimes you see that, but usually they are disbanded, they don't recover from it anymore. And in that way the whole clan culminates in that one dude. Usually clans are known by their leaders."  
(Interviewee F)

## **5. CONCLUSION**

This exploratory study has highlighted the dynamics conflicts and their management in the context of multiplayer communities. While the context of gaming can be generally seen as voluntary and high on enjoyability, it seems that conflicts do find their way in to player organizations as well. Still, serious conflicts within multiplayer communities seem to be relatively rare, and community members even deliberately try to avoid them. This can reflect the relatively small size of many multiplayer communities and the cooperative nature of the games they operate around. A player who continuously insults other players or causes grief to them can soon find out that his or her options to proceed in the game have been exhausted. When a game cannot be won alone, keeping up one's social relations becomes a necessary part of the game.

Conflicts within player organizations can be born out of simple misunderstandings, but it is the motive conflicts seem to have special potency for destruction. Players can have differing motives for participating in the game or the group effort, and balancing these or negotiating the groups values and goals can be exceedingly difficult.

Since unsolved conflicts between community members can be a threat to the functioning and stability of multiplayer communities, it is in the best interest of community members to try to manage them somehow. Often, this is a function of leadership communication.

While leadership communication is not bound to positional leadership, the two can be seen as somewhat connected. Previous studies have shown that operating as a leader in a player organization can be hard work. For example, it is not unheard of that community leaders even give out their phone numbers and make themselves accessible to handle disputes even outside actual gaming events [16].

The results of this study highlight many more questions worthy of future exploration. In communities that are characterized by short lifecycles or greatly fluctuating membership, it can be doubly challenging to engage in conflict management. It would be interesting to compare player organizations with short and long life cycles from the point-of-view of conflict management. Another interesting issue is the possible tension between task-orientation and more casual orientations to gaming. For example, how do players in leading position manage to balance the possibly conflicting needs for authority and democracy? Lastly, there can exist a great deal of variance that this exploratory study does not capture. For example, some MMOGs offer the possibility to role-play on dedicated servers. There is relatively little empirical evidence of such gaming, and it would be interesting to approach the question of conflicts and conflict resolution specifically in this context.

## 6. REFERENCES

1. Bartle, R. 1996. "Hearts, Clubs, Diamonds, Spades: Players Who Suit MUDs." *Journal of MUD Research*. 1(1).
2. Bell, B. and Kozlowski, S. 2002. "A Typology of Virtual Teams: Implications for Effective Leadership." *Group & Organization Management*, 27(1): 14–49.
3. Callois, R. 2001 [1958]. "Man, Play and Games." University of Illinois Press. Urbana and Chicago.
4. Coffey, A. and Atkinson, P. 1996. "Making sense of qualitative data: Complementary research strategies." London: Sage.
5. Connaughton, S. and Daly, J. 2005. "Leadership in the New Millennium: Communicating Beyond Temporal, Spatial, and Geographical Boundaries." In Kalbfleisch, P. (ed.) *Communication Yearbook 29*, 187–213. Mahwah. LEA.
6. Frey, L., Botan, C. and Kreps, G. 2000. "Investigating Communication: An Introduction to Research Methods." (2nd ed.) Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
7. Hollingshead, A., McGrath, J. and O'Connor, K. 1993. "Group task performance and communication technology: A longitudinal study of computer-mediated versus face-to-face work groups." *Small Group Research*, 24, 307–333.
8. Holton, J. 2001. "Building Trust and Collaboration in a Virtual Team." *Team Performance and Management: An International Journal*, 7(3/4): 36–47.
9. Koh, J. and Kim, Y. 2004. "Sense of Virtual Community: A Conceptual Framework and Empirical Validation." *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*. 8(2): 75–93.
10. Pargman, D. 2005. "Virtual Community Management as Socialization and Learning." *Proceedings of the second international conference on Communities & Technologies*. Milano, Italy, June 13–16, 2005, 95–110. Springer Publishers.
11. Seay, A., Jerome, W., Lee, K. and Kraut, R. 2004. "Project Massive: A Study of Online Gaming Communities." *CHI 2004*, April 24-29, 2004, Vienna, Austria.
12. Siitonen, M. 2007. "Social interaction in online multiplayer communities." Doctoral dissertation, University of Jyväskylä, Finland. *Jyväskylä Studies in Humanities 74*.
13. Stohl, C. and Walker, K. 2002. "A bona fide perspective for the future of groups: Understanding collaborating groups." In L. R. Frey (Ed.), *New directions in group communication*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
14. Taylor, T. L. 2003. "Power Gamers Just Want To Have Fun? Instrumental Play In A MMOG." Paper presented at the 1st Digra Conference: Level Up, University of Utrecht, the Netherlands.
15. Taylor, T. L. 2006. "Play between worlds: Exploring online game culture." Cambridge. The MIT Press.
16. Williams, D., Ducheneaut, N., Xiong, L. Yee, N. and Nickell, E. 2006. "From Tree House to Barracks: The Social Life of Guilds in World of Warcraft." *Games and Culture*, 1(4): 338–361.
17. Wilson, J. 1973. "Introduction to Social Movements." New York: Basic Books, Inc.
18. Wright, T., Boria, E. and Breidenbach, P. 2002. "Creative Player Actions in FPS Online Video Game: Playing Counter-Strike." *Game Studies*, 2(2).
19. Yee, N. 2006. "Motivations for Play in Online Games." *CyberPsychology and Behavior*, 9: 772-775.