

Causes, Magnitude and Implications of Griefing in Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games

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This thesis is submitted in total fulfilment
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Abstract

This thesis presents findings from research into the global phenomenon known as griefing that occurs in Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games (MMORPGs). Griefing, in its simplest terms, refers to the act of one player intentionally disrupting another player's game experience for personal pleasure and potential gain.

For too long it has been unknown how pervasive griefing is, how frequently griefing occurs and, in particular, the impact on players that are subjected to griefing. There has also been limited research regarding what causes a player to perform griefing. This thesis addresses these concerns by answering the research question "What are the causes and implications of griefing in Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games, and what magnitude of griefing exists in this genre?"

Mixed method research was employed using the "Sequential Explanatory Strategy", in which a quantitative phase was followed by a qualitative phase to strengthen the findings. The quantitative phase consisted of a survey that attracted 1188 participants of a representative player population. The qualitative phase consisted of interviews with 15 participants to give more personalised data. The data was analysed from the perspectives of different demographics and different associations to griefing.

The thesis contributed original findings regarding the causes, magnitude and implications of griefing in MMORPGs. Some of the main findings were:

- Factors that motivated a player to cause grief;
- how grievers selected their targets based on particular demographics or avatar characteristics;
- the pervasiveness, frequency and impact of different types of griefing;
- the amount of griefing that can be tolerated;
- how players reacted to griefing;
- the impact to the well-being of the players after a griefing incident.

The thesis concluded with advice to MMORPG developers regarding the most pervasive, frequent and impactful types of griefing, and how game design may increase or decrease the amount and intensity of griefing.

Statement of Authorship

Except where explicit reference is made in the text of the thesis, this thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma. No other person's work has been relied upon or used without due acknowledgement in the main text and references of the thesis.

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Ms Elanor Mahon



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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

Every day in online games and virtual worlds accessed through an internet connection, multiple users are experiencing what is known as 'griefing'. Griefing in simple terms refers to the act of one player intentionally causing another player grief for personal gain. It is a commonly used term in online games and virtual worlds. The developers of one such virtual world known as *Second Life* found that about 6.5% of active users report abuse each month, with close to 2000 reports every day (Chesney, Coyne, Logan, & Madden, 2009). This is in the context of *Second Life*'s user base of around 1,000,000 unique visitors every month to the virtual world (Linden Lab, 2013). IT GlobalSecure is a company that develops security technologies for online games, and the company's founder, Stephen Davis stated that 25% of customers calling support were doing so in regards to griefing (Alemi, 2007).

Looking at the global population, Figure 1 shows that the community of Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games (MMORPGs) has consisted of a total population of between 18 and 21 million players¹ (Hartman, 2011; MMO Data, 2014) last recorded at the end of 2013 (MMO Data, 2014). This figure is based on actual numbers to subscription based games. Recently, many developers have been turning to different business models for MMORPGs, and releasing less information about the number of players in their games. Many developers have reported success in utilising new business models, but have not reported actual figures. *Turbine's Lord of the Rings Online* transitioned from a subscription based to free-to-play model, opting to earn revenue through an in-game shop, as did *Trion World's* with their MMORPG titled *RIFT*. The latest MMORPG developer to report a change to free-to-play (after an initial purchase) is *Zenimax Online* with their recent MMORPG *Elder Scrolls Online* after just eleven months as a subscription based MMORPG (Zenimax Online, 2015). Many other MMORPGs use various methods of raising revenue, and subscription based MMORPGs are becoming a rare breed. In this regard, the graph in Figure 1 does not accurately represent the global population of the number of players, but rather the currently reported subscription based population. As evidenced by Ibe Van Geel (MMO

¹ MMORPGs participants are generally called a player as the virtual world they inhabit is a game. There are some other terms used to describe players such as the user, inhabitant and subscriber. For the purposes of this thesis, player will be the preferred terminology.

Data, 2014), the managing editor of the website that produces these statistics, many subscription based MMORPG's have changed to a free-to-play model with micro-transactions. Many companies are not releasing account numbers any more, indicating that the data was no longer very useful as some accounts may be inactive. In addition to this, there are also successful titles, not just in western countries but also in Asian countries, many of which are extremely successful with a healthy population of players. For example, back in 2009, it was reported that *AION* had an Asian population of 3.5 million players. Therefore the number of MMORPG players globally would actually be dramatically higher than the reported figures.

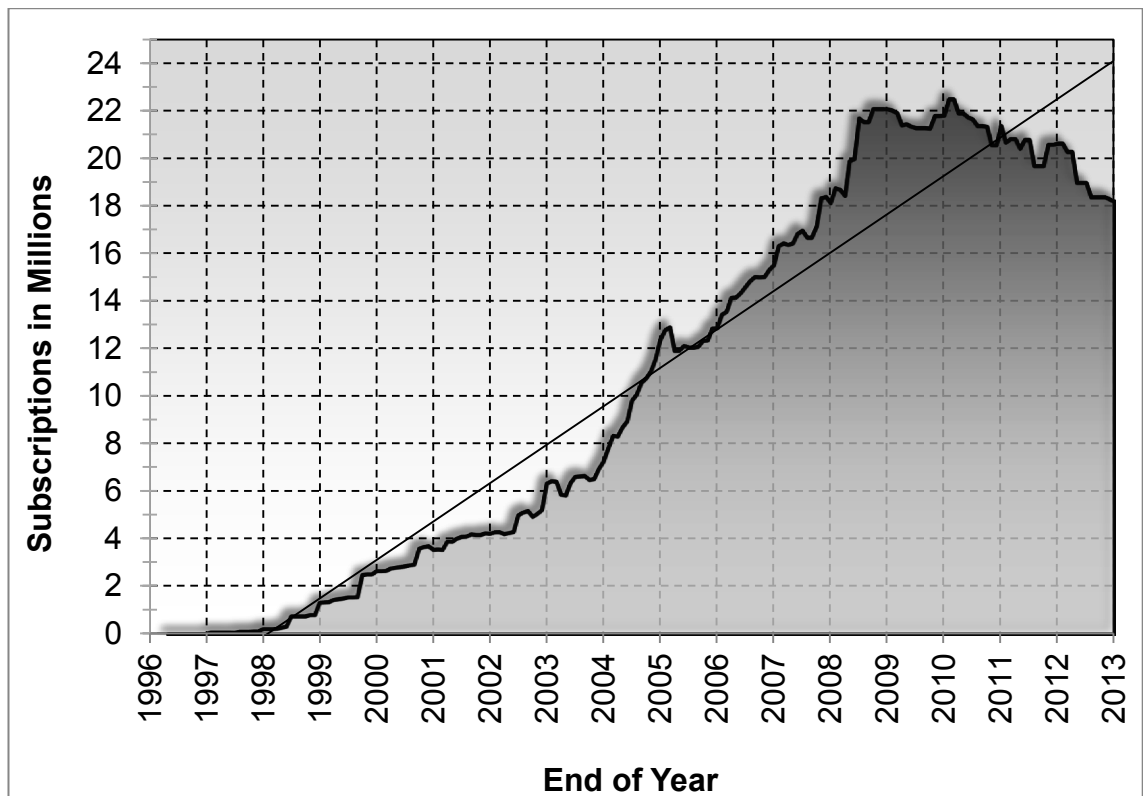


Figure 1: Total MMORPG active subscriptions - subscription data (MMO Data, 2014)

With a healthy online population that continues to grow beyond a global billion-dollar industry with no signs of stagnating (Boudreau, 2008), MMORPGs must continue to deliver engaging game play to satisfy the audience. So what is this genre of video games and how are these games conducted? MMORPGs are role-playing games that are played online with hundreds, or even thousands of people simultaneously connected to the same server. Each player controls their own avatar and depending on the game mechanics of the particular MMORPG, players may play co-operatively with or competitively against one another within the virtual world. The world the game play is conducted within is persistent; that is, it continues to function (with other people

enjoying what the world has to offer) even when another player logs out from the world. Players can log back in at any time and continue where they logged out. MMORPGs generally have quests or objectives with distinguishable goals, such as fighting monsters to gain experience and items that help to develop the player character (Achterbosch, Pierce, & Simmons, 2008; Wolf, 2012).

MMORPGs arose out of earlier, text-based online persistent worlds known as Multi-User Dungeons (MUDs). As the graphical processing power of computers improved, MUDs evolved into graphical environments including the related genres of MMORPGs and Multi-User Virtual Environments (MUVEs). MUVEs, similarly to MMORPGs are online persistent worlds, but are created primarily for social interaction, business opportunities, marketing, and educational purposes. One of the most well-known MUVEs is *Second Life* due to its broad appeal and as such, many authors have chosen to focus their research specifically on *Second Life* (Mennecke et al., 2007). In contrast, this study has primarily focused on the MMORPG genre, as it has a much larger audience than other online genres. As the genre continues to grow, the number of players known as 'griefers' will also rise. The percentage of griefers within MMORPGs is unknown and would be impossible to collect, without support from hundreds of developers, but if it is similar to the numbers reported by *Second Life*, the amount of griefing occurring in MMORPGs could be staggering.

In MMORPGs and other online video games the terminology 'griefing' came about in the late 1990s within one of the first MMORPGs, *Ultima Online*, and other online games to describe "wilfully anti-social behaviours" (Dibbell, 2008) in the sense of giving someone grief. It has also been identified as a motivational factor of some MMORPG players with a simple definition of "unfair play" (Yee, 2002). Although these definitions are short and to the point, they are also somewhat vague, and as has been discussed in research (Akrivos, 2009; Bakioglu, 2009), griefing becomes very subjective and also ambiguous. Bartle (2012) also asked "What to call a Griefer?" as these days it tends to mean a range of things. The term griefing has come to encompass a broad number of actions that could be considered griefing to one player but may not be so to another player, an umbrella term of sorts (Boellstorff, 2008).

Griefer-like behaviour dates back to the infancy of online gaming, where Bartle (1996) researched different player types, defining one type as the "Killer". Another early instance of griefing was the infamous "virtual rape" reported within the MUD LambdaMOO (Dibbell, 1999). Although research and articles relating to griefing began

early, there is still a limited amount of research into the area of griefing. Within this narrow field of research, the most common definition of griefing is when a player within a multiplayer online environment intentionally disrupts another player's game experience for his or her own personal enjoyment or gain (Bartle, 2012; Foo & Koivisto, 2004b; Mulligan & Patrovsky, 2003). A 'griever' is the term given to the player that willingly causes this disruption (Adrian, 2010; Bartle, 2012; Dibbell, 2008; Lin & Sun, 2005), thus accidental actions should not be considered griefing (Akrivos, 2009). This identifies that to be called a griever, the instigator should be aware of their actions and willing to cause the disruption, knowing fully that they will gain from it. Whether the gain is enjoyment, monetary, or the feeling of power does not matter. There are many acts a griever can pursue to disrupt another individual's experience, and many of these actions are taken within the rules and game mechanics. These shall be explored further in the literature review.

Griefing is a fairly niche term, used primarily in online gaming or virtual environments. It is related to the more commonly known terms such as harassment and bullying, but unlike harassment and bullying, griefing is a fairly new concept with limited research. Past research however, does demonstrate that griefing has been a problem since the beginning of online gaming, and still exists today. The problem still faced is that an unknown number of players are griefing others within MMORPGs for various unidentified reasons, and with no firm information on how their actions may impact others.

1.2 Research Questions

The purpose of this research was to identify the causes, magnitude and implications of griefing in MMORPGs, and also how griefing differs when comparing the data obtained among varying demographics. The goal was to make an original contribution to the knowledge in this field by answering some of the unknowns that have gone unanswered for many years. With this in mind, the research asked:

What are the causes and implications of griefing in Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games, and what magnitude of griefing exists in this genre?

In order to answer this question, the research was broken up in to sub-questions that explore the main themes of: the causes of griefing; implications of griefing; and magnitude of griefing. The sub questions therefore became:

Within MMORPGS:

- Why does a player cause grief to other players and how do they select their target?
- What magnitude of griefing exists, and how much can be tolerated?
- What is the impact of griefing from the perspectives of all parties² involved?

For the full methodology detailing how these questions were addressed, refer to Chapter Three. However, a quick overview is outlined below in order to address references in the rest of this chapter to a survey and interview that was conducted in this research.

The methodology conducted was a mixed-method called the “Sequential Explanatory Strategy” in which quantitative data collection and analysis is followed by qualitative data collection and analysis. The quantitative phase consisted of a survey that attracted 1188 participants, and the qualitative phase consisted of interviews with 15 participants in order to strengthen the survey data, and give more personalised data. The sub-research questions above were explored through the survey data and interview analysis from the perspectives of different demographics³, and different associations to griefing.

1.2.1 Assumptions

It has been assumed that all participants in this study, via survey and interviews answered honestly and were representative of the MMORPG community. As stated further in this document (in sections 3.3 and 3.4, regarding data collection) the participant’s anonymity and confidentiality was assured to be preserved throughout the data gathering process. Participants were volunteers and were entitled to withdraw from the study with no ramifications.

1.2.2 Delimitations

In order to remain within an accomplishable scope, the research needed voluntary boundaries so that it did not become impossibly large to complete.

² Those involved with griefing included the griefer themselves, but more importantly those that are targeted by acts of griefing.

³ Demographics that were included were gender, age, sexual orientation, educational level, country of residence, and ethnicity. These commonly come up in online forums, news pieces, and blogs in relation to griefing.

The first delimitation set was to focus the research within the genre of MMORPGs. This genre is just one of many multiplayer online genres such as online first-person shooters, action games and even multiplayer games on social networks, but MMORPGs are the genre that the author is most passionate about. MMORPGs are also one of few examples of persistent virtual worlds that a person can inhabit, with others such as multi-user virtual environments (or MUVes) and games set up with persistent worlds (like the popular game *MineCraft*).

The next self-imposed boundary was to focus the research on griefing and none of the similar terminology such as cyberbullying, toxic behaviour and trolling. They are all related but have varying degrees of differences which was explored in the literature review chapter. Griefing is the term most commonly associated to MMORPGs and therefore was the one pursued. It needs to be noted that this research did not aim to find any solution to the problem of griefing, but rather aimed to provide a greater insight into the nature and impact of griefing within MMORPGs.

Finally, as the research was conducted by an English speaking researcher, the most obvious delimitation set was to conduct all data collection with English speaking participants.

1.2.3 Limitations

There were some potential weaknesses of this study that could not be controlled. Although the survey that was conducted was intended for a global audience and was posted to 23 MMORPG themed website forums, they were all of the English language. This is due to the fact that data collection was restricted to an English speaking audience. This had an effect of gathering a primarily Western demographic.

The sample size was quite strong, and as outlined in the demographics section of Chapter Four, representative of an online gaming community. However, once it was broken down into categories for particular demographics, the representation of certain demographics was quite low. For example, the total number of females in the study was 148, but after identifying the more regular griefers out of this group it was found there were only 12. These limitations were noted in the discussion when it was felt that the numbers were low.

The survey was also limited by the respondents that actually did participate. While comparisons to existing studies indicate that the sample is representative of the MMORPG audience, one can never be truly sure of this.

1.3 Rationale and Aims

This research was conducted because of the author's passion for the MMORPG genre, the amount of griefing that has been seen first-hand over many years, and how that griefing can affect an individual or gaming community. Griefing can also affect developers and publishers adversely. These companies tend not to release subscription and/or player numbers, keeping the information private (MMO Data, 2014); but it is even harder to find any figures or information from developers regarding griefing as such a negative topic could be bad for publicity.

With such limited information available, the aim was to make an original contribution of significant knowledge to the area of griefing; helping to inform the communities, publishers and developers about the causes, magnitude and impact of griefing within MMORPGs. Utilising a mixed methodology, the data analysis was able to provide great insights into these areas, allowing individuals to understand griefing to a much higher level. Before analysis began, an observational journey through the world's largest populated (that has been reported) and most well-known MMORPG *World of Warcraft* was conducted. The aim of this journey was to play through an MMORPG from start to (self-imposed) end and see griefing in action. This journey was not actively searching for, or encouraging, griefing. The journey was reported in an easy to understand, but comprehensive approach. It is advisable to read this observational journey in Appendix A in order to gain a good understanding of MMORPGs and how they function, as well as the different types of griefing that are occurring in this genre.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Griefing dates back as far as the first online Multi-User Dungeons (MUDs), where players sharing certain traits were initially identified as a "Killer" type (Bartle, 1996). Not much has changed over the years with griefing still seemingly widespread. Recently, the company *ArenaNet* while developing the MMORPG *Guild Wars 2*, decided to implement anti-griefing measures (Procopio, 2011). *ArenaNet* wanted to eradicate common game mechanics that are part of popular MMORPGs such as *World of Warcraft*, as although they can be fun and engaging, they also enable griefing. One example of such griefing is ganking. Ganking typically involves players attacking weakened, defenceless or inexperienced players for an easy kill, to the other players'

detriment (Foo & Koivisto, 2004b; Goguen, 2009). *ArenaNet* established two separate areas that never intersect, one for player versus player (PvP) combat and one for player versus environment (PvE) combat (human players fighting programmed enemies), to divide these two diverse groups.

In contrast, some developers have continued to incorporate game mechanics in to their MMORPG that may enable griefing. An example of this is the recently released *WildStar* by *Carbine*, in which their PvP servers allow players of opposing factions to kill each other, enabling ganking to occur. The reason is because some players enjoy both forms of combat (PvP and PvE), and it can be an intense and exciting experience being attacked by another player under challenging conditions (Schell, 2008).

A fine balance between anti-griefing and interesting (un-exploitable) game mechanics needs to be achieved by developers to create positive gaming experiences for all, as well as cater to the competitive nature of the players. With a greater insight into griefing which this body of research provides, this balance may be more achievable. In this regard, research about griefing has been considered important in the past and still has a lot of value today in helping to understand the griefer and their actions. If players don't like something happening within a game, they are likely to vote with their wallet, choosing to spend money elsewhere (Taylor, 2006).

Previous research related to griefing often falls into certain categories. These are the taxonomy of player types and griefer types, the motivations of users of online games, proposed solutions to the griefing problem, the griefing culture, and the identification of griefing as a major problem.

Griefing can be a major problem for players, but there is very little data from the perspective of those on the receiving end of griefing, with no comparisons between different demographics. Griefing also affects developers and publishers adversely, as maintaining customer support for griefing affects their profits, and could be the difference between success and failure for a small company (Alemi, 2007). Even one of the world's largest game publishers, *Electronic Arts* acknowledged the problem. The creative director (at the time of quote) Trey Smith for *Electronic Arts* in an interview (Cipriano, 2010) said,

“I think one of the biggest problems right now is the actions and attitude of some of the gamers out there. You know who they are. If they spent less time spewing ignorant hate on the boards and in online games, and more time rallying behind the great games they love and helping to build a thriving community that welcomes everyone that shows up to play with them - everybody wins.”

While not specifically directed towards MMORPGs, this statement expresses *Electronic Arts* concerns towards griefing. However, MMORPGs tend to be much more complex than other types of online games, with their large persistent worlds and many more rules and mechanics built into the game. More rules to follow and more game mechanics to comprehend, allows for more rules to be broken and game mechanics to be manipulated to one’s advantage. Thus, griefing is more likely to occur in this genre (Davies, 2006) and warrants further investigation. Given the persistent nature of the virtual world MMORPG players inhabit, griefing is also more likely to have a greater impact upon an individual, as they grow attached to their avatar and emotionally engaged in the virtual world (Wolfendale, 2007).

Game developers, virtual world developers, researchers, and even the communities in which griefing occurs have tried to find solutions to the griefing problem. Sony for example has provided a grief reporting function to be automatically installed to Sony PlayStation 3 consoles that are connected to the Internet. Eric Lempel the VP of Sony Network Operations America spoke briefly about the update in his blog (Lempel, 2010). As a large company and publisher of games as well as developer of game hardware, Sony must view griefing as a major problem in order to justify adding this feature.

With such a large problem, this thesis divided its analysis of griefing into three important categories. These were outlined in the research sub-questions, with the intent of discovering the causes, magnitude and implications of griefing in order to understand griefing from the perspective of griefers and their targets.

1.4.1 Significance of the Causes of Griefing

Although some causes of griefing have been identified in the past this has usually been to create a taxonomy of player and/or griefer types. The first sub-question’s purpose regarding the cause of griefing was to identify the perceived differences in griefing causes among varying individuals, such as the griefers and their targets. Academically, this direction has contributed new research and data regarding the sociological issues affecting griefers and their targets, with a focus of griefing in an MMORPG. Players,

and especially those targeted by griefers, can gain insight into how the griefer thinks and why they have become the griefer's mark. Developers and publishers of MMORPGs (and possibly other online games) should also be able to use this research to more easily identify griefing problem areas in association with their own products, and the research will assist in developers creating more balanced gaming environments for their audiences, which are less amenable to griefing.

1.4.2 Significance of the Magnitude of Griefing

Identifying the severity of griefing has had extremely limited research conducted in the past. Yee (2006a) in his study on the motivational factors of users in MMORPGs identified the percentage of players motivated by manipulation (which he described as users who like deceiving, scamming, taunting and dominating other users – similar to the goals of a griefer), and differentiated the data by gender. However this data was a small subset of a much larger study about what motivates people from a general audience to play MMORPGs, and as such was not focused on griefing.

Alemi's research into virtual laws against griefing states that academics have often overlooked the victims of griefers (Alemi, 2007). She contends that people's money, time and identity are at stake and particularly important. She also says that developers of MMORPGs ignore the victimisation side of griefing, instead focusing on anti-griefing rules and measures. This could stem from the fact that very little is known about the victims. This thesis examined the impact to victims of griefing across varying levels of magnitude, addressing this often disregarded area of study. In doing so, this research has identified trends where griefing is occurring more often with greater impact, and why.

The amount and types of griefing that can be tolerated has also been an area of limited study. A player's level of toleration towards griefing differs depending on their demographics or in-game goals. So what is harmless to some people can be incredibly harmful to others. People can and will tolerate different types and amounts of griefing. An example of this was described in the well-known LambdaMOO "Cyber Rape" article (Dibbell, 1999). However this article only interviewed a few subjects, as have other studies (MacKinnon, 1997), and the findings have never been empirically tested. This thesis has addressed this by asking participants of the study their toleration levels of different types and amounts of griefing which can be read about in section 4.3 of Chapter Four.

1.4.3 Significance of the Implications of Griefing

As already stated, the subjects of griefing are often overlooked completely by existing research (Alemi, 2007), but these subjects are impacted by griefing to varying degrees. The psychological wellbeing of the individuals affected by griefing should be a very important focus of research. Grieferers themselves may also experience some affect to their wellbeing. Developers and/or publishers of the MMORPGs in which griefing occurs also have their own costs and support related to griefing.

Many players of online games may experience griefing at some point in time, but how does the impact of this griefing affect them? Dibbell (1999) discovered and wrote about the impact of griefing to multiple victims during his time in LambdaMOO through observation and interview. However, the impact to these victims was not thoroughly investigated, and only a handful of respondents were a part of this study. During data collection, this thesis conducted interviews on a larger number of participants which resulted in a greater understanding and contribution regarding the impact of griefing, in addition to a survey containing empirical data.

There are many ways in which griefing can impact a player's experience. A player may begin to dislike an MMORPG due to griefing. In this research it was found that it does affect the way they play, the amount of time they play or whether they continue to play at all. There can also be an impact to players that have felt that they were incorrectly labelled as a griefer. This thesis could be used to help these players understand griefing. Developers and/or publishers will also gain knowledge of the implications that griefing can cause. This may help them in their own objectives and goals in combating griefing.

1.5 Statement of the Problem

The research question outlined above in section 1.2 delves into areas of study that have not been asked in previously conducted research. The few studies that have skirted closely to the issues and questions presented have usually done so for other purposes and do not present data that provides answers to these questions. This has left an identifiable gap in the research field regarding griefing in MMORPGs. One major gap is that previous research almost exclusively focuses on the grieferers themselves, while overlooking those subjected to griefing. These players are suffering in varying degrees, but until this research was conducted no one knew the true magnitude of this impact. Knowledge of the victims' perceptions of griefing needed to be discovered, as

griefing is a sociological issue that in turn affects the gaming industry and its consumers. To effectively combat griefing, it is important to gain insight into the experiences of its victims, and the causes of griefing.

This thesis filled in the gaps identified by contributing a greater sociological understanding of griefing in MMORPGs. Sociology is the academic study of social behaviour and uses various methods of empirical investigation and critical analysis to develop a body of knowledge about the intended social topic, in this case the disorder of griefing. This understanding of the topic, will allow others in the information technology industry to come up with solutions and social order to the griefing problem. Griefing areas identified as higher impact can become the focus of future research and anti-griefing measures. Contributions towards society and the game industry will also occur, with benefits from the study such as a greater understanding of griefing and its implications.

This research is important to developers and publishers of MMORPGs because one of their goals is to retain player/user bases, in order to gain subscriptions and/or in-game purchases. As is described in the analysis, griefing does have an effect on the players; with some players reducing their time spent playing MMORPGs or quitting altogether. By learning about the frequency of griefing and the impact it causes, MMORPG companies should be able to produce better anti-griefing measures, and gain some control over griefing within their games. In turn there should be less victims of griefing, which may result in retaining a larger number of users than previously.

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 1: Introduction introduces the thesis, split up into six main sections.

1.1 Background introduces the concepts of griefing and MMORPGs as well as reported figures of griefing and MMORPG subscription numbers.

1.2 Research Questions discusses the purpose of this research and the questions that were posed as a goal of discovering. This section also outlines the assumptions, delimitations, and limitations of the research.

1.3 Rationale and Aims identifies the reasons that the study was conducted with an aim to make a significant and original contribution of knowledge in the field of griefing research.

1.4 Significance of the Study outlines the reasons why the research conducted is a significant area of study.

1.5 Statement of the Problem discusses the problem of griefing and how the research conducted fits in an identifiable gap in the field of griefing research.

1.6 Structure of the Thesis briefly describes each main section of each chapter.

Chapter 2: Literature Review discusses griefing literature split up into themes.

2.1 Background of Griefing discusses the background of griefing, from MUDs to MMORPGs, and from popular culture to forum discussion.

2.2 Related Research discusses literature in the field of griefing; player and griefer type taxonomies, motivational studies, anonymity, game mechanic manipulation, the griefer culture, implications and proposed solutions, as well as games studies of well-being.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methods outlines the frameworks and methods used during this research.

3.1 Research Frameworks discusses the mixed methods approach using a sequential explanatory strategy, incorporated with an established theory of motivation as well as a framework dedicated to well-being, the Self Determination Theory (SDT).

3.2 Research Scope outlines the boundaries of this research

3.3 Quantitative Method discusses the design of the survey, the conduction of a pilot study and afterwards the participant recruitment methods. With the survey online, the section also discusses the survey sample size and how the data was collected and analysed using statistical software.

3.4 Qualitative Method discusses the interview process, selection and recruitment of potential participants. With this established, the section also discusses the interview intended and final sample sizes and how the data was collected and analysed using thematic analysis.

Chapter 4: Quantitative Results & Analysis is concerned with all the findings relating to the quantifiable data obtained from the conducted survey.

4.1 Demographics outlines the demographics of the survey participants and compares these against other studies to establish sample relevance.

4.2 Causes of Griefing discusses in detail the results and analysis of the survey questions relating to the causes of griefing. There are several sub-sections including motivations to cause grief, targets of griefing, demographics and avatar characteristics related to griefing. These are examined from the perspective of grievers and the subjects of griefing, and various demographics.

4.3 Magnitude of Griefing discusses in detail the results and analysis of the survey questions relating to the magnitude of griefing. There are several sub-sections including pervasiveness, frequency, and intensity of different types of griefing. These are examined from the perspective of grievers and the subjects of griefing, and various demographics.

4.4 Implications of Griefing discusses in detail the results and analysis of the survey questions relating to the implications of griefing. There are several sub-sections including player well-being, player behaviour, in-game and real-life impact. These are examined from the perspective of grievers and the subjects of griefing, and various demographics.

4.5 Observations of Further Research Required discusses the areas of research that will be expanded on in the qualitative phase of the study.

Chapter 5: Qualitative Discussion is concerned with all the findings relating to the qualitative data obtained from the conducted survey (in particular a number of open-ended responses) and interviews.

5.1 Causes of Griefing discusses in detail the analysis of the survey open-ended questions and the interview responses relating to the causes of griefing. There are many sub-sections including additional types of griefing and targets of griefing. These are examined from the perspective of grievers and the subjects of griefing. In addition there are sections discussing why a player began to grief and why they continue, as well as the griefing type they enjoy performing the most. All of this was followed up with a new model of a griefer type taxonomy based on the data obtained.

5.2 Magnitude of Griefing discusses the analysis of the single survey open-ended question relating to the magnitude of griefing. There is only one main

section that discussed magnitude in general as this is more quantifiable than qualitative and so this discussion is limited.

5.3 Implications of Griefing discusses in detail the analysis of the survey open-ended questions and the interview responses relating to the implications of griefing. There are several sub-sections including player well-being, player behaviour, in-game and real-life impact, and impact to players incorrectly labelled as a griefer. These are examined from the perspective of griefers and the subjects of griefing. In addition, there are discussions regarding the reactions to griefing, from a new player to the established player perspective, and also the personal gain or loss that a griefer feels.

Chapter 6: Conclusions & Recommendations presents the findings to answer the research questions posed in the introduction in concise but informative detail. This chapter also describes the original contributions to this research field.

6.1 Causes of Griefing outlines the main findings regarding the causes of griefing in MMORPGs.

6.2 Magnitude of Griefing outlines the main findings regarding the magnitude, frequency and intensity of griefing in MMORPGs.

6.2 Implications of Griefing outlines the main findings regarding the impact of griefing to players and developers of MMORPGs.

6.4 Advice for Developers provides recommendations to developers on how to approach griefing in their MMORPGs in regards to the findings of this research.

6.5 Guide for the Griefed provides advice to the players subjected to griefing regarding ways to prevent, avoid or deal with griefing.

6.6 Future Research Recommendations provides recommendations made for future studies and what can be done with the results of this study.

Appendix A: An Observational Journey contains a first person written story of a journey through popular MMORPG *World of Warcraft* from a freshly created avatar with no experience to a powerful hero, and all the griefing that was encountered during the

journey. It is advisable to read this appendix after Chapter One to gain a full understanding of different types of griefing and MMORPG game mechanics.

Appendix B: Survey Flow Chart shows the flow of questions in the survey.

Appendix C: Expanded Demographics expands upon a few demographics that were contracted due to lack of numbers.

Appendix D: Survey Recruitment Advertisement displays the actual advertisement used to encourage MMORPG players to participate in the survey.

Appendix E: Plain Language Information Statement for Potential Survey Participants is the statement that outlines what potential survey participants read before agreeing to commence with the survey.

Appendix F: Survey Data Open-Ended Questions and Answers list all the answers given to each open-ended question on the survey.

Appendix G: Plain Language Information Statement for Potential Interviewees is the statement that outlines what potential interview participants read before agreeing to commence with the interviews.

Appendix H: Interview Transcripts lists all of the answers provided by interviewed participants.

Appendix I: Human Research Ethics Committee Final Project Report contains an attached copy of the final report presented to the Federation University Australia Ethics Committee.

Glossary and Abbreviations is a list of all terms and abbreviations that one may be unfamiliar with.

References / Bibliography is a list of all references for in-text citations made within the document.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Background of Griefing

2.1.1 Griefing and Cyberbullying

Griefing as a topic of research has not been widely discussed. It is a relatively new concept as it exists within a genre that is only a few decades old, online social games. The scope for griefing is much greater within MMORPGs than in other forms of online games as they are usually complex and large persistent worlds with many forms of co-operative and competitive play as opposed to smaller and shorter games (Smith, 2004). Most studies that do exist regarding griefing are limited in scope choosing to focus only on the griefer or the types of griefing and give little thought to the subjects of griefing (Alemi, 2007). This will become evident as this literature review progresses.

Cyberbullying as a concept is more commonly known than griefing due to having had much more extensive research in the past (Hinduja & Patchin, 2014). In the simplest terms cyberbullying is a form of harassment which can occur across any communication device such as a mobile phone, the Internet, or another electronic device (Perren, Dooley, Shaw, & Cross, 2010). The cyberbully sets out to defame and attack another person through usage of these devices with text, images or other forms of media. Cyberbullying can also be known as electronic bullying and online social cruelty (Kowalski, Limber, Limber, & Agatston, 2012).

Cyberbullying is used as a common phrase for many aggressive acts across communication devices, such as bullying, abuse and stalking. Cyberbullying can be linked back to traditional bullying due to these actions sharing common traits. They both include the intention to harm, an imbalance of power in favour of the aggressor, and usually there is repeated victimisation (Grigg, 2010).

As stated by Chesney et al. (2009), cyberbullying within online virtual communities is a relatively new area of research, and the term more often used by these communities for this action is griefing. Griefing therefore is a specialised form of cyberbullying, as it is conducted through an internet connection and mainly concerned with online video games, as opposed to cyberbullying which encompasses any communication device and social platform.

Griefing and griefer are the main terms used in Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games (MMORPGs) when describing the act of harassing another and the

instigator themselves, although other terminology is sometimes used. Foo & Koivisto (2004a; 2004b) called griefing 'grief play' in order to lighten the tone, as the person performing the griefing is still playing and enjoying themselves, albeit at the expense of another. They also suggested that those that cause grief unknowingly could be referred to as 'greed players'; their actions are done out of greed and while they still affect other players, they do not intentionally wish to harm others. Lin & Sun (2005) referred to griefers as the 'White-Eyed Player'. In Taiwan it means 'eyes without pupils' and refers to someone who 'looks without seeing'. Blackburn & Kwak (2014) refer to this grief inducing behaviour as 'toxic behaviour'. This term used quite often (Fahlström & Matson, 2014) but, while not excluding MMORPGs, it is more likely to be linked to another online gaming genre called Multiplayer Online Battle Arenas (MOBAs).

Although griefing has had a limited quantity of research conducted over the last couple of decades since its existence, it often appears in popular culture, gaming articles, comic strips and as a discussion in forums.

2.1.1.1 Griefing in Popular Culture

Due to the popularity of the MMORPG *World of Warcraft* (WoW), it is often mentioned in media such as television shows that appeal to a similar demographic to the MMORPG audience. Quite often, the reference is passing, like a cast member playing WoW in the background, or a chat between cast members about their avatar in WoW. It feels like a personal in-joke between cast and viewer. Occasionally the reference turns into a full length episode, using some form of griefing to oppose or feature the protagonists of the show.

South Park's season ten *Emmy* award winning episode named *Make Love, Not Warcraft* (Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, 2015) aired in 2006, focused on the four boys of the main *South Park* cast playing *World of Warcraft* and crossing paths with a high level player that abuses his power by repeatedly killing the boys over and over, making it hard for them to progress (South Park Studios, 2014).

The popular television series *The Big Bang Theory* used *World of Warcraft* as the setting for a hacker stealing all of Sheldon's virtual items, and the cast going on a quest to confront the hacker (CBS Entertainment, 2014), in the episode called *Zarnecki Incursion* that aired in 2011.

The Simpsons took a different route. Instead of satirising a real MMORPG, *The Simpsons* season 18, episode 17 called *Marge Gamer* that aired in 2007 focused on *Bart* and *Marge* within a fictional MMORPG called *Earthland Realms*. *Bart* was role-

playing an avatar called “The Shadow Knight” that every player was afraid of, due to being the most powerful character in the game. *Bart* was acting as a griefer; as he put it “senseless killing” and *Moe* claimed that “he once beat me to death with my life bar!” Eventually a large group of players retaliated against the Shadow Knight’s behaviour, killing him and claiming vengeance (Simpsons Wiki, 2015).

The Guild takes things one step further as the whole show is dedicated to the lives (both online and offline) of the players within a guild of a fictitious MMORPG. A number of incidents and cultural references to griefing occur in the show such as one of the guild members tormenting and killing the guild leader repeatedly for a week without remorse (The Guild, 2014).

Griefing also occasionally appears in popular culture through comic strips. One of the most recognisable comics related to griefing is *Penny Arcade*’s comic strip titled *Green Blackboards (And Other Anomalies)*, shown in Figure 2, that delivered a simple equation indicating that anonymity causes a regular person to behave inappropriately:

“Normal Person + Anonymity + Audience = Total Fuckwad” (Penny Arcade, 2004).

This image from the *Penny Arcade* comic strip was removed due to copyright. It can be seen on their website: <http://www.penny-arcade.com/comic/2004/03/19>

Figure 2: *Penny Arcade*’s “Greater Internet Fuckwad Theory” (Penny Arcade, 2004)

Other comics have also tackled the topic of griefing in different ways. The *CTRL+ALT+DEL* comic, shown in Figure 3, examined the term “Kill Stealing” which can be described as when a player attempts to kill an enemy that is already engaged in combat with another player, in order to reap their reward of experience, items or in-game currency. The comic indicates that a kill stealer “will go to great lengths to garner credit for any and all kills”, and in the case of the comic - even killing themselves before another player can.



Figure 3: CTRL+ALT+DEL's kill-stealing comic strip (Buckley, 2007) – Used with permission

The Daily Blink created a parody of a magazine cover for the rogue class in *World of Warcraft*, called *Electronic Ganking Monthly* (Figure 4). As described earlier, ganking typically involves players taking advantage of a weakened player by killing them for personal gain (Foo & Koivisto, 2004b; Goguen, 2009). The magazine parody suggests that when the player runs out of inexperienced players to grief, they could actually

attack players of their own level, emphasising the “own level” part as players ganking typically do not look for an evenly matched competitor.



OUR TOP ROGUE ATTEMPTS TO PICK POCKET THE LICH KING - SEE PG. 38

ELECTRONIC GANKING

The #1 DPS Magazine **MONTHLY**

April 2010 - <http://www.thedailyblink.com>

OUR 2010 GUIDE TO WOW

...For When You're Out of Lowbies to Grief

213 Activities!

Ganking people your own level

Quests!

Dungeons!

Auctions!

And tons of other things you **didn't know you could do in WOW!**

BOO.

One Author's Tale of HORROR:
I ROLLED ON A PVE SERVER!!!

How Taurens Stealth
and 17 other Burning Questions - Answered!

Figure 4: *The Daily Blink's* magazine for rogues: *Electronic Ganking Monthly* (*The Daily Blink*, 2010) – Used with permission

2.1.1.2 Griefing Discussion on the Internet

Griefing occasionally appears in online news articles when griefing related behaviour happens in an online game with a large impact to many players such as a hacker massacring thousands of players in WoW (Purchase, 2012), harassment of minorities such as female game players (Pinchefsky, 2012), or to outline a developers decision regarding player behaviour such as *Riot Games* honouring good behaviour (Chambers, 2012). Sometimes there are online editorials about griefing, such as a personal warning to exercise caution with your personal information like you would in the real world (Plunkett, 2013; Wyand, 2013). In addition websites have created lists of the best (or worst?) griefing incidents of all-time (Lore Hound Staff, 2007; McKinney, 2011). All of these and many more remind us of the pervasiveness of griefing, and generate some discussion about griefing, but it is the heated discussions within online gaming forums that create the most debate about the topic of griefing. One particularly long discussion of boastful griefing was on *The Something Awful Forums* (Something Awful Forum Users, 2007-2015), with some “highlights” of the entire 471 page thread (as of the beginning of 2015) described in the initial post. One MMORPG related incident showcases a video of a group of players interrupting an in-game funeral (for a fellow player that died in real-life) in *World of Warcraft* through mass player killing. Another incident relates a group of players converging at the banks in *Ultima Online* and simultaneously unleashing earthquakes butchering all of the players at the bank. They had free reign to loot whatever they wanted while their victims lost their items and their skill points.

On occasion discussions on forums regarding griefing can devolve in to a series of trolling which is another form of cyberbullying. Trolling has been described as:

“An act of intentionally provoking and/or antagonising users in an online environment that creates an often desirable, sometimes predictable, outcome for the troll.” (Thacker & Griffiths, 2012)

And:

“Trolling tends to be thought of as rhetorically baiting others usually into frustration and anger.” (Higgin, 2013)

Breaking this down, it is another form of harassment via provocation, and conducted in an online environment. This could be any online environment including games, so sometimes particular forms of antagonistic griefing are also referred to as trolling. However, Holmes (2013), like this thesis, specifically outlines that griefing and trolling

are two different paradigms, and that trolling quite often involves political targeting and not the targeting of regular players like griefing.

Trolling was witnessed first-hand while posting invitations for this thesis' survey. Often the community would see that the survey topic was about griefing and the forum thread would degenerate into someone attempting to grief or troll the person studying griefing, with others either joining in or defending the researcher (Darkfall Forum Users, 2012; Zam Forum Users, 2012).

More often though there are discussions that keep to the point of the topic and give indications that everyone sees and relates to griefing differently. Examples of these discussions have been started by industry experts Bartle (2012) the co-developer of the first MUD, called simply *MUD* (or *MUD1*), on website *Terra Nova* about "What to call a Griefer?" and Koster (2008), the Lead Designer of the first successful MMORPG: *Ultima Online*, on his personal website about a seemingly pro-griefing article written by Dibbell (2008).

2.1.2 Multi-User Dungeons

Griefing has been occurring in online games since their inception. Bartle (1996) identified in his paper the "Killer" player type, which had some qualities that would now cause them to be considered as a griefer. Dibbell (2008) noted that griefer-like behaviour was evident in early MUDs, such as a cyber-rape incident in the MUD *LambdaMOO* (Dibbell, 1999). This confirms that griefing has been occurring since the beginning of online gaming.

These two MUDs outline how very broad the MUD genre was (and still is). *MUD1* had game-play mechanics similar to table-top Dungeons & Dragons (D&D) games in that players would fight monsters to obtain experience and treasures (Achterbosch et al., 2008; Bartle, 1987). *LambdaMOO* on the other hand focused solely on social interactions between players, creating venues to gather without intent of defeating monsters or exploring dungeons. These particular distinctions, goal oriented and socially focused; shows that the MUD was evolving into two separate entities which were the precursor to today's MMORPGs and MUVes. The following background information about MUDs describes some of the game mechanics that heavily influenced MMORPG developers:

1. **Player versus Environment (PvE)** - PvE has a focus on character advancement through combat rather than role-playing. Combat is initiated versus monsters and not other player characters. MUDs utilising this mechanic generally called it 'Hack and Slash' (but in MMORPGs it is known as PvE), and rewarded players with treasure and experience to achieve higher levels, much like the table-top role-playing games such as Dungeons and Dragons (D&D) which inspired many MUDs (Bruckman, 1996).
2. **Player versus Player (PvP)** - PvP game mechanics are devoted to player conflict, in which players compete against each other in virtual combat. Apart from PvP focused MUDs, this is generally restricted or completely unavailable in many MUDs, possibly to avoid griefing.
3. **Role Playing** - This element of MUDs encourages participants to immerse themselves in the role of their character, and act upon their role at all times.
4. **Socialising** - This element of MUDs allows players to communicate with each other through text. Some MUDs focused entirely on creating environments specifically designed for socialising in which no combat occurred.
5. **Graphical Enhancements** - Rather than relying solely on text-based descriptions, this feature uses computer images to display the virtual world to its inhabitants. In some cases it is just a user interface graphical enhancement.

The evolution of the different elements of MUDs into MMORPGs is shown in Figure 5.

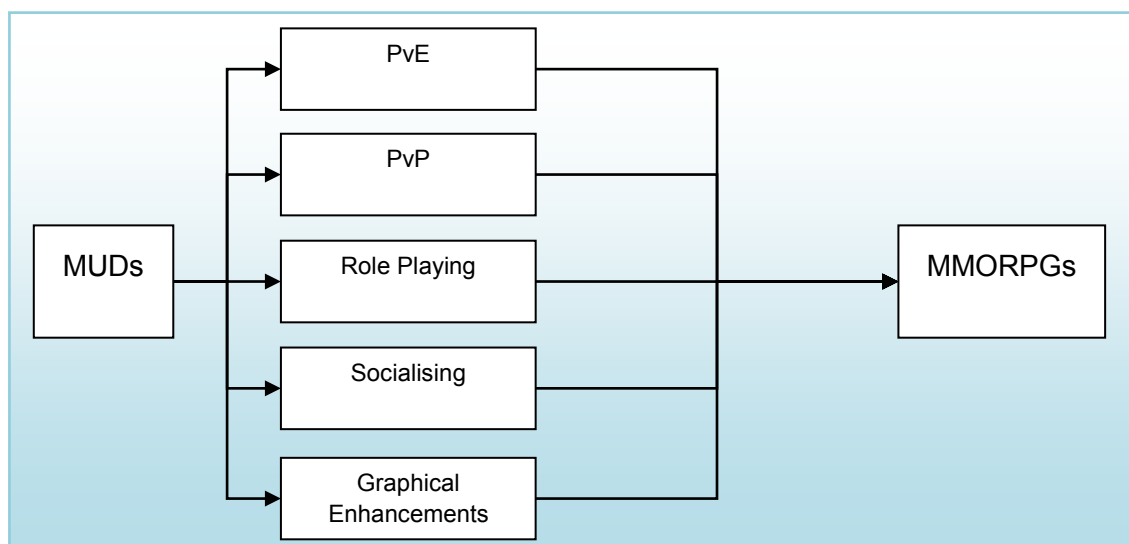


Figure 5: How MMORPGs were influenced by elements of MUDs

2.1.3 Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games

MMORPGs specifically borrow concepts from those MUDs that focused on goals and achievements, as well as combat versus programmed enemies and player controlled characters. Whether an MMORPG is PvE or PvP focused (or has both styles mixed in) is a significant design consideration for the developer and usually sets the focus for how the entire game will be structured. An example of this is *Star Wars: The Old Republic*, an MMORPG released in December 2011 by Bioware. This game centres around the universe of the Star Wars franchise, with the main story element focusing on the battle between the Galactic Republic and the Sith Empire (Bioware, 2010). This sets the tone for both PvE and PvP, in which players can join one side or the other and fight against programmed enemies or actual human-controlled players of the opposition.

The other elements an MMORPG borrows from MUDs are role playing, socialising and graphical enhancements. All virtual worlds (both MMORPG and MUVE) can be graphically intense with the latest three dimensional representations of their worlds. In fact some early MMORPGs were first known as Graphic MUDs before the terminology of MMORPG was introduced as described in an interview with Brad McQuaid (Aihoshi, 2000), a developer of the early MMORPG *EverQuest*.

While role playing is in the MMORPG acronym, not all MMORPGs have enforcement of role playing mechanics. Some offer none at all, while other MMORPGs offer servers specifically for players that enjoy role playing. Sometimes MMORPGs are referred to by the shorter acronym MMOG or MMO, removing the role-playing part, and focusing on the fact that they are online games played by a large audience. The social influence of MUDs is evident in MMORPGs, as it features a large open virtual world with many players that engage in social activities on a regular basis, from chatting or connecting with a loved one, to tactically planning out the attack of a large foe.

Many developers of both MMORPGs and MUVEs have been seeking ways to combat the growing problem of griefing, as it can cause distress to the victim and possibly force them to abandon the virtual world. However the magnitude and impact of griefing has not been identified on the proposed scale this research will take. Similar research in the past may have looked at it briefly, but usually related to another topic of research.

2.2 Related Research

Griefing as a topic of research has not been widely discussed. It is a relatively new concept as it exists within a genre that is only a few decades old, online social worlds. Previous research can generally be divided into the following categories:

- i. Player types or taxonomies and their motivations for participating in MMORPGs (not specifically related to griefing, but this research discusses this archetype)
- ii. Griever types or taxonomies
- iii. The use of game mechanics and rules to cause grief
- iv. Anonymity as a means for grievers to exist
- v. The culture of griefing
- vi. The impact of griefing on players and developers
- vii. Specific cases of griefing (Case studies)
- viii. Laws and means to reduce the escalation of griefing
- ix. Behavioural and well-being studies; some of which can be related to griefing.

2.2.1 Player Type Taxonomies

Bartle (1996) qualitatively looked at player types of Multi-User Dungeons (MUDs) and relating to griefing in particular, wrote about the 'Killer' type in an often cited paper titled "Players Who Suit MUDs". This was before the term griever was used. His 'Killer' type found enjoyment through imposition on others, such as bullying and domination. Through his study he found they were able to use the tools provided within the game world to impose upon others enjoyment. This paper is often cited by other papers as it is the first taxonomy of player types in online games.

Bartle took his own work further breaking the original four player types into eight (Bartle, 2005). The 'Killer' type was split into two new types, the implicit killer and the explicit killer. According to Bartle, the implicit killer, those that act before thinking are called the 'Griever'. Grievers are in-your-face, enjoy attacking other players, and like the idea of a bad reputation. The explicit killer, those that think before acting are called the 'Politician'. Politicians act with forethought, can manipulate others subtly and prefer a good reputation. The Politician shares a few traits that could be considered griefing such as the subtle manipulation of others.

2.2.2 Defining Griefing and Griefer

Bartle (2012) defined a griefer as someone who deliberately did something for the pleasure in knowing it caused others pain. Foo and Koivisto (2004b) described griefers as players that engage in play styles that specifically disrupt other players experiences, while Lin and Sun's (2005) definition was similar with the addition that they derive enjoyment from their behaviour. Barnett and Coulson (2010) relate a griefer to a bully, stating that these players enjoy participating in anti-social behaviours that disrupt the enjoyment of the game for players on the receiving end. Lam and Riedl (2011) also use the term bully, stating that griefers are perhaps best described as the bullies and sociopaths of the virtual world. It is apparent that researchers agree on the overall terminology of the words griefing and griefer, with the perception that three effects need to be present for a player to be considered a griefer:

- i. The action is intentional,
- ii. The action disrupts another player's enjoyment, and
- iii. The instigator gains pleasure from the action.

If these three are present, then the player that causes the action can be called a griefer, but they may be causing grief for more than just pleasure. There could also be monetary, virtual loot, control, or power to gain. Some studies have identified different types of griefing that seem to fit the broad definitions above.

When Foo and Koivisto (2004b) set out to define grief play and establish a taxonomy of the types of griefing, their results suggested four different types. This taxonomy also appeared in more detail as a grief play motivational model in Foo's dissertation about grief play (Foo, 2008).

- **Harassment** - Causing emotional distress to the victim for the enjoyment in watching them suffer.
- **Power Imposition** - The griefer demonstrates power through acts such as killing other players repeatedly, killing new and inexperienced players, and other forms of imposition. Johansson and Verhagen (2010) added that intentionally killing team members would also fit under this category.
- **Scamming** - The griefer uses fraudulent business schemes in order to swindle another player.
- **Greed Play** - A greed player's motivation is to benefit regardless if the action annoys anyone else. These actions include 'Ninja Looting', 'Kill Stealing' and 'Camping'. For reference, ninja looting can be described as when a player takes virtual loot that they are not entitled to, and camping is when a player remains in

a location where a particular enemy spawns in order to get items that only drop from this enemy. Kill stealing was previously described in 2.1.1.1.

Bakioglu (2009) argues that grief play and griefing are two interrelated but distinct activities, and a type of action may be considered griefing in one virtual world but not in another. Achterbosch, Miller and Vamplew (2013) also came to this conclusion, that it depended on the virtual world and also the player as to what exactly constituted griefing. Smith (2004) also used the terminology grief play, stating that it was a more general heading for the actions of players that had been labelled as cheaters, player-killers, kill-stealers, exploiters, team-killers (intentionally harming team members), and campers. Tucker (2011) also describes these types of griefing, as well as luring monsters to attack others, friendly-fire, preying on new players, and white-knighting - a form of vigilante justice against other griefers. She indicates that griefing behaviour is traditionally dominated by white heterosexual men.

Lin and Sun (2005) conducted a qualitative study of in-depth interviews and analysis of forum postings and reports. Some of the more significant mentioned griefing behaviours from the interviewees were:

- Verbally abusing other players.
- Cheating for valuable equipment.
- Stealing equipment from other players' kills.
- Killing other players without provocation.
- Finishing off injured monsters another player was killing.

More recently, Rubin and Camm (2013) distinguished griefing varieties by their most important differences. They did this after analysing 80 posts from an online forum boasting about griefing achievements and comparing them to a set of results from interview participants. The six dimensions of cause to grief were:

- Intentionality to disrupt;
- maliciousness;
- lucrateness;
- means;
- deceptiveness; and
- emotional perceptions.

It is apparent that griefing is becoming one all-encompassing term for many forms of undesirable and anti-social behaviours and actions within online virtual worlds, and the question asked by Bartle (2012) "What to call a griefer?" is another area of research that is still up to debate.

2.2.3 Player Motivations

Yee (2002) set out to discover the motivational factors of MMORPG players. The study was not looking specifically for player types where a player may fit into one box, as they may overlap. His methodology was a quantitative survey, with questions that were structured from Bartle's initial work (Bartle, 1996) as outlined above, and his own study of *EverQuest* (Yee, 2001). Yee created five factors for testing, Socialize, Achieve, Explore, Escape and Grief, with multiple questions for each. He discovered five significant motivational factors from the data obtained; Relationship, Immersion, Grief, Achievement, and Leadership.

Yee continued his research into motivations and derived experiences of users in MMORPGs (Yee, 2006a). He states that Bartle's previous work on player types had never been empirically tested, and he wanted to do so (Yee, 2006b). Yee added to the five previous motivational factors discovered with more factors to test for significance in an online survey. After the results were analysed, Relationship, Immersion, Manipulation, Achievement, and Escapism were found as the most significant influences on motivation to play MMORPGs. In this paper, the manipulation factor relates heavily to griefing (it also replaced his previous factor called grief), as it measures a player's inclination to manipulate and objectify others for personal gain. Yee discovered that males scored significantly higher on the manipulation factor than females.

Yee has gone on to do further research both by himself (Yee, 2006b), and in co-operation with other authors (Williams, Yee, & Caplan, 2008), regarding the demographics and motivations of MMORPG players. Here the main motivational factors were further reduced to three: Achievement, Social and Immersion. Manipulation was no longer a stand-alone factor. The three main factors were broken in to ten sub-factors. The three sub-factors of Achievement were:

- **Advancement** - The desire to accumulate power, wealth or status in-game. However these studies did not differentiate from a user trying to gain this

advancement via friendly means or through griefing. It was not the purpose of these studies.

- **Mechanics** - The desire to familiarise yourself with game rules and mechanics in order to optimise your avatar. Once again there was no indication that for respondents who were motivated by this factor, were motivated because of the ability to manipulate or bend rules and mechanics to their advantage such as a griefer would do.
- **Competition** - The desire to compete with and challenge other human controlled characters. Is it a fair competition or is griefing involved in this motivational factor? These studies did not explore those possibilities.

These three sub-factors, in contrast to Social and Immersion sub-factors, initially appeared to have the most relation to griefing. In Yee's studies it was found that male players scored significantly higher on all achievement sub-factors than females. It was also the strongest motivation for increased playing time across all demographics.

2.2.4 Anonymity

Anonymity in MMORPGs has been found to increase a player's propensity towards griefing (Chen, Duh, & Ng, 2009). The authors looked at the deindividuation theory in which individuals will begin to feel anonymous and lose their sense of identity and responsibility when immersed in a crowd. They tested this theory against Foo's (2008) grief play motivation model and discovered that anonymity would increase a player's enjoyment in all four of Foo's griefing categories.

"Anonymity breeds meanness" claimed Coates (2004) in his article about sociopathic behaviour in video games. He states that this is because people are more easily prone to lose one's temper with one another if they don't know one another, and can remain anonymous while doing so. This type of behaviour has been given a particular title called the "Online Disinhibition Effect" and refers to abandoning inhibitions and regular social norms when interacting with other people online due to the anonymity and invisibility available and the minimal authority present (Suler, 2004). This type of behaviour has even been presented in popular culture in *Penny Arcade's* comic strip (Figure 2: presented previously in section 2.1.1.1) that delivered a simple equation:

"Normal Person + Anonymity + Audience = Total Fuckwad" (Penny Arcade, 2004).

2.2.5 Game Mechanic Manipulation

The term “game mechanics” refers to the rules and challenges in a game and was defined by Sicart (2008) as “methods invoked by agents, designed for interaction with the game state.” This definition comes from object oriented programming terminology, and without that background can be hard to follow. Rouse (2010) defined it as what players can do in the game world and how they can go about achieving these goals, while Hunicke, LeBlanc and Zubek’s (2004) definition of game mechanics are the various actions, behaviours, and controls that are available to the player in the game world.

To guide a player through content and help them to establish goals and overcome challenges, MMORPGs are also structured with rules and constraints in mind. Humphreys (2008) uses EverQuest as an example in which the engine is coded with greater rewards for those players playing together in a group to encourage socialising.

Griefers tend to act against the intentions of the developers, usually finding loopholes in the rules (Lam & Riedl, 2011). Some players believe that if a rule is possible to break, it should be acceptable as there was no code preventing it from being broken (de Zwart, 2009). Other players are able to manipulate or exploit the game mechanics of a video game (Ruggles, Wadley, & Gibbs, 2005; Snider, Lockridge, & Lawson, 2012) in order to satisfy their griefing appetite. However it has also been suggested that griefing is more about breaking community norms rather than manipulating the game code (Humphreys & de Zwart, 2012). Schell (2008) suggested multiple avenues in which griefers are able to use the game mechanics to their advantage:

- **Player killing** (also known as ‘ganking’) - Griefers thrive on killing other players that are severely disadvantaged, such as a player of much lower experience. Humphreys (2008) indicates that this behaviour can be managed by game developers by applying restrictions to how and where player versus player (PvP) combat can take place.
- **Stealing** - There are many ways in which virtual items can be stolen. The most common methods include ‘Kill Stealing’ in which a player waits for another player to almost defeat an enemy, and then they deliver the killing blow. Depending on game mechanics some MMORPGs will reward the kill stealer with all the experience and treasure.

- **Trading** - Most virtual worlds allow trading of virtual items and currency. Grieferers try to misrepresent items they are trading utilising the trade interface to unsuspecting victims.
- **Obscenities** - Even with filters for obscene language, grieferers can find ways around the system forcing the language upon others.
- **Loopholes** - Schell suggests that a griefer finds pleasure in exploiting loopholes in a game. Examples provided by the author were a griefer deliberately disconnecting from the game during a losing battle to deny another player killing them fairly, or rearranging furniture in a public place to spell obscene words.

Some articles have also discussed that grieferers can manipulate game mechanics to fulfil their goals. During the beta of *Ultima Online*, the developers of the MMORPG were trying to find a balance between freedom and rule enforcement. One of the developers, Richard Garriott, spoke about how the players had the freedom to build objects and move them around the world. Some crafters abused the system by creating multiple wooden chairs (for example) and using them to enclose another player in a four walled chair prison, and then demanding a ransom (Crecente, 2010). Another example is from the online social game *The Sims Online*. In this example a griefer invites a player over to their home and allows them to use their swimming pool. The griefer, having control over all of the objects within their home, will remove the swimming pool ladder while the other player is inside the pool, trapping the victim. According to game mechanics the ladder is the only way out of the pool and the victim will eventually drown or starve to death (Parker, 2007).

2.2.6 Griefer Culture

Griefing has emerged as more than just a solo activity, in particular it has generated its own culture (Dibbell, 2008). The author Dibbell interviewed the leader of 'The Patriotic Nigras', a group of 150 people with the sole focus of causing grief. The interviewee claimed that his group mainly cause grief for the laughs, and because "*most of us are psychotic*" (Dibbell, 2008; Giles, 2007a).

Giles (2007a) also conducted an interview with "The Patriotic Nigras", and as well as doing it for the laughs, they claimed that they enjoy fighting against inhabitants of the MUVE *Second Life* whom take their virtual world very seriously. One of these dedicated inhabitants, Catherine Fitzpatrick, has been continually targeted by the group as they think "she takes *Second Life* more seriously than anyone we've ever

encountered.” Catherine Fitzpatrick in her own interview with Giles (2007a) gave her opinions on the impact of grieving as a victim. She told of feeling shock and humiliation, especially during her first encounters with griefers. Being in a virtual world that involves transactions to make income in real world currency, she also stated that grieving can cause a negative impact into her business. These interviews while informative are not representative of griefers and their victims in general, as they were only conducted with one person from each group in extreme situations.

Other research has mentioned the player-driven in-game funeral event (for a real-life death) that was disrupted by members of an opposing guild called Serenity Now (Webber, 2014). Gibbs, Carter, Arnold, and Nansen (2013) presented arguments in favour of the attackers; they were playing the game as intended and serious matters do not belong in a game. However they also indicated that the perpetrators were tasteless and reprehensible.

2.2.7 Developer and User Implications

As outlined in the introduction, developers such as *Linden Labs* have reported 6.5% of their active 800,000 users report abuse each month (Chesney et al., 2009; Linden, 2011). So why do the users report grieving this much, how does it impact them, and do the developers care? As this is only the actively reported incidents of grieving, how much goes unnoticed, and how much grieving occurs in other virtual worlds? All these questions have gone mostly unanswered, leaving identifiable gaps of knowledge in this research field.

Coates (2004) claimed that developers do not care about grieving issues and therefore most games or worlds are not built with implicit anti-griefing features. The victims of grieving are often overlooked by most game developers and academics, with many rules focusing on the griefers themselves (Alemi, 2007). In an extreme case of the impact of grieving, it was reported that a Chinese player killed his competitor in real life, after he lent his virtual weapon to this competitor who then proceeded to sell it for in-game currency which he kept for himself (Associated Press, 2005). Quite often though, the implications are less extreme but still felt quite harshly, as for example Gray (2014) claims that in video games women and people of colour experience sexism and racism from other players if their demographic is discovered. This is an area that this thesis will discuss in Chapter 4 when viewing the participants' demographics.

2.2.8 Case Studies

Dibbell (1993) documented one of the earliest and most widely publicised cases of grieving which involved a virtual rape that took place in the MUD known as *LambdaMOO*. He later included a newer version of the article in his book about virtual worlds (Dibbell, 1999). In these, he described the perpetrator of the virtual rape as “Mr. Bungle” and the acts he committed as “ghostly sexual violence”. Within the virtual world Mr. Bungle utilised a voodoo doll (that was pre-programmed to allow the user to force actions upon others they didn’t commit) to sexually assault multiple inhabitants of *LambdaMOO*. It wasn’t until an administrator was summoned in to pacify Mr. Bungle and his voodoo doll within a virtual cage that the violently escalating assaults stopped. This is an extreme case of grieving, but everyone is likely to tolerate grieving at different levels. In this case, because of the extreme and violent nature of the grieving, the administrators came to the conclusion in a joint meeting with victims and other inhabitants to delete Mr. Bungle from the *LambdaMOO* database. One victim had admitted to Dibbell in his article that she was in tears in real life. Even though the ‘crime’ was just textual descriptions on a screen, negative virtual experiences spilled over into real world emotions.

This was a relatively small qualitative study based on one particular incident through observation and interview. Although it was not the focus, it was discovered that the *LambdaMOO* community will not tolerate virtual sexual assault (which is quite understandable), but the frequency or magnitude of grieving users can tolerate is still unknown.

2.2.9 Governance in Virtual Worlds

As outlined in section 2.2.3, anonymity increases a player’s propensity towards grieving in virtual worlds. The only limit to the deviant acts of grieving is *how* the game is programmed combined with the standards of the community within the game (Alemi, 2007). There are generally no consequences to the griefer in the real world when they remain anonymous in the virtual world. This also relates back to the “Online Disinhibition Effect” discussed earlier and how the minimal authority present on the Internet allows anti-social behaviours to manifest without consequence (Suler, 2004) In an example, Alemi (2007) states how a victim of grieving was cheated out of virtual money, and the victim felt that they had nowhere to turn but the local real world police. Nothing could be done as there are no laws against theft of virtual assets.

Currently the main form of protection against griefers is the End-User Licence Agreement (EULA) or Terms of Service (ToS) (de Zwart, 2009), in which a player must agree to terms and conditions in how they can or cannot participate in the MMORPG. If a player is found (whether through program code or being reported by another player) to breach those terms, the developers can act upon the infringements, for example by suspending or permanently banning the offender. However, de Zwart and Humphreys (2014) state that most developers do not get involved in player versus player disputes, as the EULA does not cater to the level of specificity that is relevant.

A common way for developers to act is through 'Game Masters', an employee hired to act as a moderator, game rule enforcer and customer service representative within the game server (Webber, 2014). Players can ask for assistance from the Game Masters⁴, but MMORPGs often have a low ratio of game masters per player (Tychsen, Hitchens, Brolund, & Kavakli, 2005), meaning that each player is placed in a queue. To alleviate the load, some games form a player-developer community, in which some delegation of responsibility is placed on the players as moderators (Ashton, 2009). However, often players will take matters into their own hands, policing the behaviour of one another (Humphreys, 2008). A case which Humphreys (2008) describes was about a player that was stalking another player, attracting nearby computer controlled monsters to this player, resulting in these monsters killing him. This happened repeatedly for a week. The reason stated by the player that they caused this grief, was because his victim had harassed his 12 year old daughter within the game. In contrast, Johansson (2013) states that guilds and clans police their own members regarding griefing with their own sets of rules and a code of conduct that members must follow.

Alemi (2007) proposed a virtual court system for virtual game worlds, as a EULA does not provide a place for the victims to have their voice heard. Some MMORPGs have now established player governing bodies within their world, created by the developers in order to allow players to police each other. In 2008 within *EVE Online* the Council of Stellar Management was formed as a governance body providing useful and relevant feedback to the developer of the game (de Zwart & Humphreys, 2014). *Archeage*, released in 2014 in western countries, contains a court house in which players reported for crimes must stand and be judged by their peers. Although stealing and murder is not against the game rules, if the player responsible is caught and reported, then chances are they will end up in jail for as little as two minutes to several days in real

⁴ Game Masters may assist with, but are not limited to, anything from games bugs, accidental deletion of virtual items, software and hardware issues, and griefing and scamming reports.

time (Archeage Wiki, 2015). Without these built in systems, griefing can escalate to cause conflict among the game community, as they feel the need to govern their game with contradictory views (Siitonen, 2014).

2.2.10 Game Behavioural and Well-Being Studies

Behavioural and well-being theoretical frameworks have been utilised as methods for identifying the well-being of players of video games. Some literature builds original theoretical frameworks for new studies to use or in order to conduct their own further studies. Bartle (1996) proposed a theoretical model of player types, which he expanded upon later (Bartle, 2005). Yee (2006a; 2006b) and Foo and Koivisto (2004b) used Bartle's framework as a starting point for their own theoretical frameworks on motivational and griefer type taxonomies respectively. Yee and Bailenson (2007), also created another framework they termed the "Proteus Effect", where a user's behaviour will change based on the avatar they were given to use in-game. Chen et al (2009) used the deindividuation theory, a social psychological theory, in order to pursue their goals of how anonymity in online games provides an opportunity for griefing.

The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) was developed by Deci and Ryan (1985) then expanded upon later (Ryan & Deci, 2000), and it is used to compare intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, people's behaviours and how the thwarting of conditions can negatively impact their well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000). While SDT is predominantly used in psychology, it has also become a framework that other fields have found very valuable, with hundreds of research papers cited on the SDT website (Ryan & Deci, 2014), establishing SDT as a sound empirical theory. Recently SDT has also been used as the approach in virtual worlds and games research.

Ryan, Rigby, and Przybylski (2006) explored how the SDT can be used as an approach to study the motivation for computer game play. Rigby & Przybylski (2009) states that there is evidence in past research that SDT as a motivational model can keep pace with the evolution of video games and virtual worlds, with research conducted after this confirming the evidence (Johnson & Gardner, 2010; Peng, Lin, Pfeiffer, & Winn, 2012; Ryan et al., 2006).

Inchamnan and Wyeth (2013) measured player experience in three games based on SDT, with the game *Portal 2* eliciting the greatest feelings of competence, autonomy, intuitive control and immersion. They indicated that these findings demonstrated that the game activity design of each game directly influenced these results. Johnson, Wyeth and Sweetser (2013) proposed a new model for determining factors for the

influence of videogames on well-being. The SDT focuses on the psychological well-being of the individual, whereas this new model called the “People-Game-Play Model of Videogames and Wellbeing” added player characteristics, game features and experience of play as additional factors.

Bowman, Schultheiss and Schumann (2012) found that younger male players are less concerned about their avatar’s well-being and consequences of their actions and therefore more likely to be associated to inciting others and other anti-social gaming behaviours.

Espelage & Swearer (2010) propose that victims of (real-life) bullies may not be satisfying all of the SDT needs that promote motivation, for example when the victim plots alternative routes to avoid a bully they are in fact suppressing their autonomy. The same could be true for victims avoiding their griefers in an online game. As applied to the current study, SDT would help explain the motivations of griefers and the behaviours and attitudes of the victims, especially the behaviours the victim adapts to when their motivating needs are not met.

In the subsequent chapter, the research design will be discussed; explaining how the SDT framework was integrated into this thesis.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methods

3.1 Research Frameworks

The research design used to conduct this study contained both quantitative and qualitative methods, and can be described as a mixed methodology (Creswell, 2009). The reason for conducting a mixed methodology was because firstly the study was to be conducted internationally with a large group of people, and quantitative data can reveal generalizable information of a representative sample. However, it can fail to provide specific explanations and examples. Qualitative data when used together with quantitative data can complement the overall view that quantitative provides with personal context in the form of explanations and examples. The next section describes the specific mixed methodology that was employed for use during the research.

3.1.1 Sequential Explanatory Strategy

Creswell (2009) describes multiple sequences in which mixed methods can be carried out. The specific method this study utilised was the “Sequential Explanatory Strategy” (Figure 6), which Creswell describes as a popular strategy for mixed methods design that appeals to researchers with strong quantitative leanings. Sequential Explanatory Strategy is divided into two phases. During the first phase the collection and analysis of quantitative data occurs. The second phase builds upon the results of the first through the collection and analysis of qualitative data (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006). This strategy is especially useful in examining results from the quantitative data in more detail via the qualitative approach (Creswell, 2009).

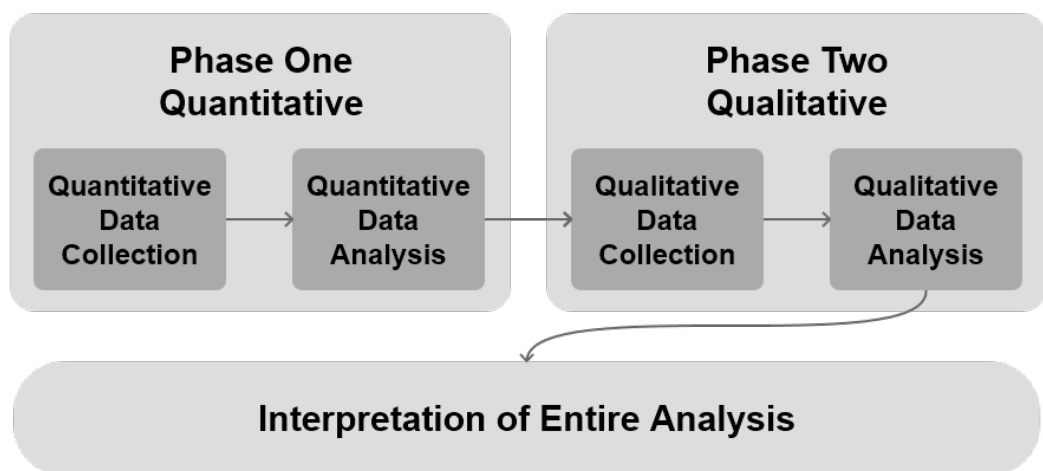


Figure 6: Phases of the Sequential Explanatory Strategy

The first phase conducted a global quantitative survey online to gather responses from the audience of MMORPGs regarding the questions posed in section 1.2. The online approach is especially useful because of its inclusiveness in reaching an international audience, and its anonymity and privacy allows people to feel more comfortable in discussing any sensitive issues (Mallen, Vogel, Rochlen, & Day, 2005; Price & Dalgleish, 2010). Most of the questions on the survey were quantifiable and able to be statistically analysed. The remaining questions were open-ended and these are discussed below in phase two. Those that perform grieving (griefers) and those subjected to grieving (griefed) were invited to participate in the survey, as were witnesses to the acts of grieving. The goal of this quantitative phase was to capture an overarching global view of grieving through the analysis reported in Chapter Four. This analysis was completely statistical. However the numbers cannot give a personal perspective of the grieving occurring, and so a second phase was conducted to address this. This second phase of the Sequential Explanatory Strategy was a qualitative phase and assisted in backing up the quantitative data. It did this by providing context to and an understanding the results from the survey data analysis, especially results that had insufficient numbers to conduct a thorough analysis. In addition to backing up the quantitative data, the qualitative discussion was open to explore new insights as the discussion with participants progressed.

During the survey a few open ended qualitative questions were asked, and these were analysed during phase two, to assist in gaining more personal answers from respondents. In addition, at the end of the survey permission was asked of participants to conduct a further study utilising interviews. Conducted in sequence after the survey, the interviews were used to inform and expand upon some of the quantitative analysis. The griefers and griefed that were interviewed (with continued anonymity and confidentiality) provided much more valuable personal insight to the research through this qualitative interview based process.

3.1.2 Theory of Motivation

Within the quantitative survey, a framework that was understandable to the average MMORPG player was chosen to help structure some early survey questions regarding the causes of grieving. If the motivations of the players could be understood, perhaps their reasons for grieving could be discovered. Much game related research has successfully used a theory proposed by Yee (2006a) of the motivation to play online games. This theory defines motives which MMORPGs can provide to the player, in terms of three main factors of achievement, socialising and immersion. These three

aspects of achievement, socialising and immersion are broken down into ten more manageable sub-factors that can motivate a player to play an MMORPG:

Achievement:

- **Advancement** - The desire to gain power, progress rapidly, and accumulate in-game symbols of wealth or status.
- **Mechanics** - Having an interest in analysing the underlying rules and system in order to optimize character performance.
- **Competition** - The desire to challenge and compete with others.

Social:

- **Socialising** - Having an interest in helping and chatting with other players.
- **Relationship** - The desire to form long-term meaningful relationships with others.
- **Teamwork** - Deriving satisfaction from being part of a group effort.

Immersion:

- **Discovery** - Finding and knowing things that most other players don't know about.
- **Role-Playing** - Creating a persona with a background story and interacting with other players to create an improvised story.
- **Customisation** - Having an interest in customizing the appearance of their character.
- **Escapism** - Using the online environment to avoid thinking about real life problems.

This group of motivational factors as outlined earlier was used in the survey and analysed for trends in the quantitative results and analysis chapter. While Yee looked at the motivations of all players collectively, this current study broke players down in to separate groups of grievers, grieved, and a category that consists of players that cause and are subjected to grieving equally, called the intersector (this category is discussed in detail during analysis). These game-based motivations of the grievers gave indications towards why they cause grief, while the grieved players' motivations indicated why they continue to play MMORPGs despite the grieving incidences. This theory of motivation was also a basis for some interview questioning in order to build upon and inform the results obtained from the quantitative analysis.

As explained, the motivational factors were used as a means for discovering the MMORPG related motivations of a player of differing associations to grieving. Additionally needed was a framework that could identify the well-being of the grieved after being subjected to grieving and the griefer after performing grieving upon others, in order to determine the implications of grieving.

3.1.3 Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is a theoretical framework that is concerned with the motivations of people, both intrinsically and extrinsically. Factors such as enjoyment, interests and curiosity motivate an individual from within. These intrinsic forces help an individual behave in effective and healthy ways. While externally, factors such as rewards of money, scores and grades, opinions from others, and threat and coercion can all apply an extrinsic motivating force (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

According to Ryan & Deci (2000), autonomy, competence and relatedness are three conditions that promote the strongest and most committed forms of motivation. The satisfaction of the needs for these three conditions was validated as being related to having fun in video games, from simple games to complex virtual worlds by Ryan et al. (2006). Within video games the three conditions can be described as follows (Przybylski, Deci, Rigby, & Ryan, 2014; Rigby & Przybylski, 2009):

1. The need for **Autonomy** is your sense of control; you feel free and have opportunity to perform any activities you desire within the game.
2. The need for **Competence** involves feeling skilled in your chosen tasks, mastering challenges and/or achieving your goals in the game.
3. The need for **Relatedness** is your feeling of being included, close and connected with others in the game community.

SDT proposes that there is a negative impact on the well-being of an individual should any of these three conditions be unsupported or thwarted in an activity, which results in a lowered motivation of the individual to persist in the activity. SDT has been used to analyse the activity of playing within virtual worlds and games in the past as detailed earlier in the literature review. As an established and well-regarded theoretical framework, the SDT was ideal to use in order to determine the impact upon a players well-being after being subjected to grieving as their motivations to perform an activity successfully are effectively being disrupted. Grieving behaviours could indeed impact negatively upon the autonomy, competence and relatedness of the grieved, but

perhaps also have positive or negative effects among the grievers. These areas were discussed during the analysis in later chapters.

While video games have indeed been the subject of SDT studies, the SDT framework has also been applied to research across many fields of knowledge, the most popular fields being education, sport and physical activity, organisations and work, and health care. Other fields with interest in using SDT include biological and neuropsychological, psychopathology, psychotherapy, and virtual environments and games, all of which are quite well represented on SDT's official website (Ryan & Deci, 2014). This extensive reach across many varied fields represents a well-respected and broad theoretical framework for human motivational, behaviour and personality studies. The SDT also looks at a person's sense of volition, initiative, and well-being and how social and cultural factors can affect these. Przybylski, Rigby & Ryan (2010) have stated that since their inception, video games have increasingly tapped into these three basic psychological needs.

As outlined by Reis, Sheldon, Gable, Roscoe, & Ryan (2000), the need for autonomy indicates that the individual feels free and has opportunities to perform the activities they desire. Within video games, flexibility in goals, differing strategies and freedom in the game environments provides autonomy to the individual (Przybylski et al., 2010). MMORPGs widely support an individual's autonomy within the boundaries of the game mechanics. A player can explore the persistent world and make their own choices while engaging in the world, rarely having to follow pre-defined interactions (Blanchard & Frasson, 2006). A player is only restricted by the mechanics and rules of the game. However, game masters (or administrators) will usually not act against rule breakers unless that player is reported to them.

The need for competence is rewarded by the experience of the individual achieving their desired goals (Reis et al., 2000). Competence needs in video games are expressed through goals and challenges (Przybylski et al., 2010), and once achieved, satisfy out intrinsic need for competence (Rigby & Ryan, 2011). The goals and challenges of an MMORPG are many and varied, fighting against computer and human controlled individuals, large open virtual worlds with numerous 'quests' and functions and financial objectives to name a few. All of these contribute towards the competence condition. However, many individuals' competence needs will be satisfied by different goals or challenges at varying degrees of difficulty. Therefore, goals to be achieved in

the MMORPG will be set by each player individually in order to satisfy both autonomy and competence.

The feeling of being close and connected to others communicates the need for relatedness (Reis et al., 2000). Relatedness in video games keeps expanding with more and more social interactions within online communities (Przybylski et al., 2010). In MMORPGs thousands of players are simultaneously connected to a server, and can build up a thriving community. The goals of MMORPGs usually require social interaction, planning and teamwork to progress, satisfying the needs of relatedness.

Using this theory in the current study it was expected that there would be a harmful impact to the well-being of an individual who has been subjected to a griefing attack. This is because their sense of autonomy would be in question and their intrinsic motivation of enjoying the game has been interrupted by the extrinsic force of the griefer. It was also suspected that the grieved may also lose their sense of autonomy, due to avoiding situations and activities they wish to perform in fear of a griefer disrupting their experience. The grieved players' need for competence would in theory be even greater than usual, as disruption within the game has slowed their progress towards their goals and created unwanted challenges. It was also assumed before analysis began that griefing would affect the relatedness of the victims, as they may feel isolated from the rest of the community.

Looking specifically at the griefer, what is intrinsically and extrinsically motivating the griefer to affect the well-being of their victim? Throughout the literature review in Chapter Two, it was found that intrinsically a griefer will be motivated by enjoyment and extrinsically by power and monetary gain. Like the grieved, it was theorised that the griefers' needs would be affected. The need of competence of the griefer could be fulfilled by achieving their goals of power, financial gain or reputation. In regards to relatedness, griefing is viewed more as an anti-social activity and therefore being close and connected to others in an MMORPG was thought to be a need the griefer would require less of, unless the griefer functions in a group of griefers.

In order to look closely at the three factors of the SDT and confirm the theories above, this study incorporated this framework into a line of questions for both griefers and grieved in the quantitative survey. The SDT was also integrated in to the qualitative interviews. The questions were structured in a way to determine the griefers and grieved players' levels of autonomy, competence and relatedness. In particular plain

English was used to structure each question in the survey so they related to the needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness, but did not directly ask the respondents about each need (so as to avoid misinterpretation and as respondents could not ask for assistance if they were confused).

The SDT framework helped in answering the research question regarding the implications of grieving in MMORPGs (“What is the impact of grieving from the perspectives of all parties involved?”). Through the SDT, the impact to the needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness were discovered, which was expected considering this framework had been used in game research on multiple prior occasions.

3.1.4 Research Frameworks Justification

A mixed method approach was decided upon for a number of reasons. Firstly, quantitative data can only reveal generalised quantifiable outcomes, whereas qualitative data can provide rich context of lived experiences. When used together, quantitative and qualitative data can complement each other providing results that are quite distinct from single-method designs (O’Cathain, Murphy, & Nicholl, 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). In the case of this thesis, the overarching view of the masses regarding the causes, magnitude and implications of grieving was supplemented with personal experiences and context from individuals. The strengths of both approaches are utilised to dramatically enhance the value of the data (Creswell & Clark, 2011; Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007).

There are different ways to implement a mixed methods approach; quantitative and qualitative in sequential order versus simultaneous data collection and analysis, and of equal weighting versus one with more influence. This research focused on quantitative as the leading data analysis and collection method, as prior strengths lay in this method. The qualitative data collection and analysis followed on from the quantitative analysis and they were of equal priority. This was well-suited to the Sequential Explanatory Strategy mixed method as it appeals to researchers with quantitative leanings. As described by Creswell (2009), the sequential explanatory design helps the researcher provide more detail to findings from the quantitative approach through the use of a qualitative element. Also, previous literature (Dibbell, 1999; Giles, 2007a; MacKinnon, 1997) suggests that interviewing a small sample group of individuals provides insightful data relevant to the research question. Data and knowledge gained

during the literature review process and answers submitted and analysed from the survey was contextualised via the interviews.

The interview process was chosen as a supplement to the quantitative survey in order to gather more personalised data that expanded and informed upon the previous data collected. As mentioned in the literature review, Dibbell (1999) interviewed a small number of victims to griefing, discovering that the impact of griefing was felt beyond the virtual world. Dibbell (2008) and Giles (2007a) discovered via interview that griefers do it “for the laughs”. In these interviews the sample size was very small, and they usually have no quantitative data to compare their results against, something which this study has addressed.

3.2 Research Scope

The research conducted focused on MMORPGs as already outlined. Griefing does occur in other online communities such as MUVES as identified in previous sections, as well as the PlayStation Network and Xbox Live. It also occurs in game genres other than MMORPGs that can be played online with multiple players. This research however did not pursue these communities or alternate game genres, as the author had previous experience as a researcher and a player of MMORPGs, as well as having had identified gaps in the literature that the author could pursue. The focus of the thesis was also on the griefing subset of cyberbullying, as griefing is still a relatively new concept with minimal research conducted in the past, as opposed to the large body of cyberbullying knowledge. In addition, the term griefing is the one most commonly used in context with MMORPGs and online video games in general.

3.3 Quantitative Method

3.3.1 Survey Design

The survey was built using Lime Survey software securely hosted on Federation University Australia’s own server. Lime Survey is open source, meaning it is free to use, but more importantly it was also quite easy to create a complex survey, that allowed data to be exported to a statistical application such as *IBM’s SPSS*. The survey went through multiple iterations before going live to the MMORPG public as outlined in the next chapter section. The final version of the survey for this research consisted of seven parts:

- i. Part One contained multiple questions about the respondents' demographics.
- ii. Part Two established the respondent's commitment and investment to MMORPGs, such as their experience and time investment. They were also asked about the factors which motivated them to play MMORPGs. Rather than create and analyse a new set of factors, an established set of motivational factors was used. Yee's theory of motivation (discussed in section 3.1.2) was incorporated to identify the motivating factors of the various respondents from a diverse demographic background. This identification of motivations helped establish which factors of MMORPGs contribute towards the causes of griefing.
- iii. Part Three identified the respondent's association to griefing. The associations for consideration were a griefer, a player that is grieved, and/or a witness of griefing. Respondents were asked to rate their association to each type on a scale of zero to five, or never to always respectively.
- iv. Part Four contained questions about the causes of griefing with the goal of answering the first sub-question posed in section 1.2 "What causes a player to become a griefer and how do they select their target?"
- v. Part Five contained questions about the magnitude of griefing with the goal of answering the second sub-question posed in section 1.2 "What magnitude of griefing exists, and how much can be tolerated?"
- vi. Part Six contained questions about the implications of griefing with the goal of answering the final sub-question posed in section 1.2 "What is the impact of griefing from the perspectives of all involved?" This part of the survey addressed the well-being of griefers and grieved players through the use of the SDT previously discussed in section 3.1.3.
- vii. Part Seven concluded the survey by allowing respondents to add their own comments regarding griefing, and asked if they wished to participate in further studies by providing an email address. A small subset of those that were interested in further participation were selected for interviews (outlined in section 3.4 Qualitative Method).

The questionnaire was designed primarily as a closed survey, meaning that the questions had a series of set answers from which to choose. The survey contained yes/no answers and radio boxes in which participants could only choose one of a series of answers and also questions with multiple answers. There were also questions that could be answered on a scale from "never" to "sometimes" to "always". This structured approach allowed the data to be imported into a statistical program for analysis with minimal need for data-cleansing, and the set groups of answers allowed

results to be processed statistically. Each part of the survey from four to seven outlined above also contained an open-ended question at the end of that section in order to allow respondents to elaborate on that aspect of the survey if they wished to do so. In addition to this, a few questions allowed the respondent to select 'Other' and provide their own answer not included as an option in the survey. These questions were once again open-ended. Many chose to voice their opinion in these open-ended sections and these were analysed thematically (see section 3.4.5 in the qualitative methods) during discussion further in the thesis. The full structure of the survey can be seen in Appendix B, and the answers to the open-ended questions are provided in full in Appendix F.

3.3.2 Pilot Study

An earlier version of the survey outlined in Appendix B was sent out to eight individuals to pilot. Half of these were professional academics within the Mount Helen campus of Federation University Australia, and the other half were casual MMORPG game players known to the author. The goal of the pilot was to gather feedback on the following:

- i. The average time it took to complete the survey.
- ii. Whether the questions and answers could be understood and flowed properly.
- iii. Whether the questions and answers were suitable for the MMORPG genre.
- iv. Whether there were any suggestions or criticisms about the survey that could be improved.
- v. Whether appropriate selections and types (such as a radio button or a checkbox) were available for each question.

This pilot was valuable in discovering that a few questions could be reworded for clarity in addition to adding or removing some answers. An example of that is creating a list of educational levels that would be familiar to a global audience. The format for some answers was also altered to gain a better response from survey participants. A good example of this was allowing respondents to rate the motivational factors on a scale from 1 to 5, rather than just selecting all the factors that motivate them. In regards to the time it took to complete the survey, the consensus was roughly 15 minutes to finish all questions, with the possibility of additional time if the respondent is thorough in filling out the open ended questions.

After making the necessary changes, a new pilot study was conducted. The same individuals were invited to test the survey; however a new subset of students from the

Mount Helen campus of Federation University Australia were also invited to give a fresh opinion regarding the survey. Feedback was positive, and the majority of pilot survey testers had no problems, with just a few minor suggestions to improve clarity and simplicity in understanding the questions, especially those questions relating to Self-Determination Theory and a players well-being (this theoretical framework is discussed thoroughly in section 3.1.3). Overall, the pilot testers believed that the survey was ready to conduct on the global scale as outlined in the following sections.

3.3.3 Participant Recruitment

After the survey was approved by Federation University Australia's Ethics Committee, participant recruitment could commence. To begin with, approval from major developers of the MMORPG genre was sought to post an invitation to the survey on their worldwide forums. Next, approval was pursued from moderators and website administrators of popular generalised MMORPG news and review websites to post the invitation to the survey. (The invitation is presented in full in Appendix D). With circulation of the survey among high-ranking MMORPG developers and general websites, the targeted audience would take the study more seriously.

Approval to post the invitation to the survey was gained at many, but not all, targeted website forums. Some website forums had a list of rules which indicated that the posting of academic research surveys was allowed. In a few of these cases the survey invitation was promptly removed and incorrectly cited by moderators as advertising. The following list of website forums (in alphabetical order) and their association to MMORPGs outlines which websites allowed the invitation to be posted:

1. Age of Conan - Official forum dedicated to *Age of Conan* (MMORPG).
2. Bioware - Developer of *Star Wars: The Old Republic* (MMORPG), and many highly-rated single-player RPGs.
3. Darkfall - Official forum dedicated to *Darkfall* (MMORPG).
4. Diablo Fans - A *Curse* network⁵ forum for the RPG franchise *Diablo*.
5. Dungeons & Dragons Online - Official forum dedicated to *Dungeons & Dragons Online* (MMORPG).
6. G4TV - forums for a general gaming audience (*G4TV* was a large global gaming website that closed in 2013)

⁵ The *Curse* network is a very popular network of websites dedicated to different games and MMORPGs, providing news, forums, game modifications and other related material.

7. Guild Wars 2 Guru - A *Curse* network forum for the MMORPG franchise *Guild Wars*.
8. IGN - A very large gaming news website.
9. Lord of the Rings Online – Official forum dedicated to *Lord of the Rings Online* (MMORPG).
10. MineCraft - A *Curse* network forum for the online game franchise *MineCraft*.
11. MMORPG.com - A huge general MMORPG website and community.
12. MMO Champion - A huge general MMORPG website and community primarily dedicated to *World of Warcraft* and other *Blizzard* products.
13. ONRPG - A general MMORPG website and community.
14. Reddit (/MMORPG sub"reddit") - A huge social website and community, aimed at the MMORPG crowd.
15. RIFT - Official forum dedicated to *RIFT* (MMORPG).
16. RPG Watch - A general RPG website and community.
17. Star Wars: The Old Republic - Official forum dedicated to *Star Wars: the Old Republic* (MMORPG).
18. Steam - A huge general gaming website and community.
19. Stratics - A general MMORPG website and community.
20. TERA Online - Official forum dedicated to *TERA Online* (MMORPG).
21. Ultima Online - Official forum dedicated to *Ultima Online* (MMORPG).
22. World of Warcraft - Official forum dedicated to *World of Warcraft* (MMORPG).
23. ZAM - A huge general MMORPG website and community.

With so many invitations posted, a large variation in potential respondents was expected and obtained, from hugely popular MMORPGs to niche MMORPGs, and from a general MMORPG audience to single-player RPG players that have dabbled in MMORPGs. All of these website forums cater to global audiences, but the invitations to the survey were only posted in the English language, in English speaking forums. The invitation on each forum provided a link to an external website (securely hosted at Federation University Australia) that was using the Lime Survey software.

Before proceeding to the survey questions, potential respondents were asked to read a "Plain Language Statement" (shown in full in Appendix E) so that they became aware of the contents of the survey, the sensitivity to their anonymity, and possible emotional distress that may occur due to recounting grieving incidences. The statement also outlined that by answering a question, the respondent was giving consent to the researchers to use their answer. Therefore, whenever a participant dropped out early from the survey, they had still provided some data to varying degrees in regards to how

far they proceeded through the survey. The age allowable and approved by Federation University Australia's Ethics Committee to participate in the survey was 16 years of age and up. However, a small number of questions were hidden from 16 to 17 year olds, as they were inappropriate for minors to answer. Each section of the survey ended with a different amount of respondents that had completed that section with a valid set of data.

3.3.4 Sample Size

The survey remained open for eight weeks, at which time the amount of daily responses to the survey had declined to almost zero. As the invitation to the survey was already posted to the most suitable forums that allowed this, there were no additional avenues to pursue to find new participants in a timely manner, and so the survey was closed.

The survey attracted a total of 1188 respondents that began the survey and completed some sections. However this number of respondents did not complete the entire survey. Each part or section of the survey, as briefly mentioned in section 3.3.3, was completed by a different number of respondents.

There was a clear divide between the number of participants that completed parts one, two and three, (that is all of the questions related to demographics, MMORPGs in general and the respondents' association to grieving), compared to those that finished the entire survey, (completing the questions relating to the causes, magnitude and implications of grieving). The number of respondents that completed each part is listed below:

- Part One = 1082
- Part Two = 1080
- Part Three = 1028
- Part Four = 706
- Part Five = 694
- Part Six = 656
- Part Seven = 656

The drop in participants especially after part three was unfortunate, but the sample was still acceptable. It appeared that the drop occurred due to the size of the survey and the fact that many respondents were asked to answer questions from multiple sets such as their point of view as a griefer, a grieved player and a witness. In the forums where the

survey was posted, some lost participants indicated that they felt they were answering the same questions too often from the perspective of a different role in the grieving. If a future study was to conduct a similar survey, the experience here suggests that it would be wise to ask respondents to identify with their most likely association to grieving (griever, grieved or witness) and then only ask the particular question set that they are related to.

With such a clear drop in respondent numbers after part three, this paper used two datasets for its calculations and analysis. The first dataset included all respondents that finished up to and including part three (or the first half of the survey), a total of 1028 respondents; ensuring that the respondent at least indicated their association to grieving, and allowed for analysis of their motivations for playing MMORPGs and types of actions they believed to be grieving. The second dataset included all respondents that finished the entire survey, a total of 656 respondents; allowing for accurate details regarding the causes, implications and magnitude of grieving.

This research targeted a very specific audience; those that were self-identified grievers, and those that were subjected to grieving. Most of these had also witnessed grieving to some extent. The survey was also quite long and took most participants at least 15 minutes to complete, with a much longer time investment required when the respondent chose to provide detail in the open-ended questions. With these concerns in mind, the sample size obtained was appropriate, and gave a varied demographic that matched similar studies targeting a general MMORPG population as outlined in Chapter Four. Each dataset retained a similar demographic profile.

3.3.5 Data Collection

One of Federation University Australia's servers hosted the Lime Survey software to conduct the quantitative survey. As participants of the survey completed each question, the secure server gathered the data via server-side scripting, and saved them for review. It was inaccessible to tampering. The software used does not contain any form of identification and respondents remained completely anonymous, unless they wished to participate in the second phase of the qualitative interview in which case only an email address was required.

All data obtained from the survey was not used for any purpose other than this research topic (both in this thesis and peer-reviewed papers). This followed the Federation University Australia guidelines of the "Code of Good Practice for the

Conduct of Research". The only required confidential data was the email address of respondents that had agreed to be able to be contacted further for interviews.

Due to the sensitive nature of the study, it was possible emotional feelings may have risen in respondents as they recalled past victimisation from grieving. The survey's "Plain Language Statement" contained the suggestion to seek assistance from international voluntary emotional support groups such as Lifeline International and Lifelines other recommended support groups over the world if the respondent felt the need to do so.

3.3.6 Statistical Analysis

The data gathered from the quantitative survey was imported into a computer statistics application called *IBM SPSS Statistics* (version 20) for analysis. This is a highly powerful quantitative analytical software tool. Preliminary results began early to ensure results were available in time to inform preparation for the interview phase.

The demographics were analysed in terms of frequency values through SPSS's descriptive statistics. This function simply outputs a frequency and related percentage of respondents associated to each variable (such as male and female for gender). It also has the ability to calculate the mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation (s) of each variable. These additional functions were utilised throughout various parts of the analysis of the data, as can be seen in Chapter Four.

Cross-tabulation functions within descriptive statistics were also conducted on the majority of survey answers versus different types of player demographics. Cross-tabulation allowed the comparison of two independent variables to identify how one affects the other. This technique was especially useful in comparing the grievers and the grieved, and also comparing individuals within those groups to identify trends or relationships.

3.4 Qualitative Method

3.4.1 Interview Process

At the end of the quantitative survey, permission was gained from some participants to conduct a further study through interviews. The respondents that gave permission to be interviewed voluntarily gave their email address for further correspondence. There was

no other data containing confidential details such as name or home address, and those that were selected still gave no further identifiable data.

The follow-up qualitative survey's intention was to gather more data specifically from self-proclaimed grievers and subjects to grieving. As the participants were worldwide, interviews were conducted via the email they provided. This ensured that their identity remained anonymous. The interviews began with questions based on the results from the quantitative survey questions, with the objective of respondents opening up and providing detailed replies to help reinforce and strengthen the results. The participants were free to answer as they see fit. Examples and stories of certain grieving incidences were welcomed. Upon inspection of their returned answers, the interview continued back and forth between researcher and participant until each avenue was elaborated upon sufficiently.

As mentioned the interview questions relied on preliminary results of the survey. These results helped determine which data required expanded answers and analysis, exploring unexpected results, and also where gaps were discovered in the research. In addition, these interviews applied the SDT model as outlined in section 3.1.3 to identify more personalised impacts to a player's well-being.

3.4.2 Participant Recruitment

Potential participants were invited to participate in the interview at the end of the quantitative survey if they met the requirements as a griever or grieved player, and were 18 years of age or older. If they wanted to participate they opted in and then provided an email address, meaning it was entirely optional to participate. Completing the survey did not mean the respondent was obligated to participate in the interview process.

As stated, the conducted survey attracted 1188 total respondents, but only 656 finished the survey and therefore were asked whether they would like the opportunity to participate in interviews. Approximately 30% of the participants that finished the entirety of the survey gave permission to be contacted in the future regarding an interview process.

After preliminary analysis of the quantitative survey questions, the initial results were analysed in order to create a starting set of questions for the interview participants. The amount of data provided in the open-ended questions on the survey gave an indication of how much each participant was willing to contribute to this research. Through this, a number (detailed in the following section 3.4.3) of self-identified grievers and grieved

were selected to be interviewed. In addition to this, there were also respondents that indicated they both caused and were subjected to grieving quite often, which this research identified the player as an intersector for lack of an established term⁶. Two of the intersectors were also invited to participate in the interviews.

The interviews were conducted through email as to avoid gaining any other personal information from participants. Each selected participant was sent a new “Plain Language Statement” so that they became aware that they would remain anonymous and that possible emotional distress may occur due to recounting grieving incidences. The potential participants were asked to identify whether they wished to proceed with the interviews. If someone declined, they were no longer contacted, and an alternative volunteer was asked to participate. Selected participants that accepted the invitation received the set of preliminary questions. After this, the back-and-forth email discussion was semi-structured based on the answers that participants provided.

3.4.3 Sample Size

The sample size goal for the interviews initially featured 22 participants consisting of ten grievers, ten grieved, and two intersectors. This chosen sample was to solidify any results analysed during the survey analysis phase. 40 potential participants were selected in two groups; the first 22 were the ideal candidates as the survey answers that they provided had the most detail and personal input in the open-ended survey responses. The remaining 18 were also strong candidates for interview, but were set aside as backup in the case that some of the initially chosen did not respond or chose not to participate. Of all 40 pre-selected, there was a healthy range of demographics, including seven females.

The emails were sent out to the first batch of potential participants. Two declined due to lack of time to participate. After some time elapsed without reply from eight people, a second round of invitations were sent out to ten more people to try and retain the initial goal of 22 participants. At this point, contact and acceptance for the interviews was made with 12 participants. Another round of invites was sent out to the remaining eight pre-selected individuals. The result was that another four accepted the invitation. Unfortunately only two females of the seven had replied and accepted the invitation, but then one of those females dropped out when they lost many of their typed replies

⁶ The closest terminology to the ‘intersector’ would be the bully-victim (Marini, Dane & Volk, 2008), which is related to the common definitions of a bully and a victim, except that the bully-victim is both a bully and a victim of bullying.

and had no time to continue. The total then included seven griefers, six grieved players and two players that indicated they equally caused as much griefing as they received - the intersector.

During the interview email communication, it was decided that 15 participants was sufficient as the data being provided was generous in quantity, with evidence of some repetitive answers that would help to establish some themes coming through from the initial set of interview questions. With this decision, no more invitations were sent to further potential participants. The interviews concluded when reaching the point of data saturation, where the data obtained became repetitive and contained no new ideas. Previous research about griefing (Dibbell, 1999; Giles, 2007b) suggested that interviewing a small sample group of individuals provided data very close and personal from the participant regarding the conducted research.

3.4.4 Data Collection

Email communication was conducted with the selected interview participants. The email server was securely hosted by Federation University Australia's email servers. Email replies were stored and saved in the secure email client. Once again no form of identification was asked for (and encouraged not to provide), and was not received. No names were provided in any griefing related stories presented by participants.

The confidential data obtained from the interviews were not used for anything other than this research topic. This followed the Federation University Australia guidelines of the "Code of Good Practice for the Conduct of Research". The only required confidential data was the email address of the interview participants. After interviews concluded, the completed interview data was attached to the associated survey ID, and then the emails provided were removed from the data to ensure respondents remained anonymous and de-identified. The full set of interview transcripts are provided in Appendix H.

Due to the sensitive nature of the study, it was possible emotional feelings may have risen in respondents as they recalled past victimisation from griefing. The initial email to potential participants for the interviews contained a "Plain Language Statement" (shown in full in Appendix G) that clearly contained the suggestion to seek assistance from international voluntary emotional support groups such as Lifeline International and Lifelines other recommended support groups over the world if the respondent felt the need to do so. No such incidences were reported or discussed during interviews.

The qualitative interview data was analysed using a process called thematic analysis. To help construct the themes and codes necessary for thematic analysis, the data was imported into a Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) called *NVivo 10* by *QSR International*.

3.4.5 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis (TA) is a widely used method of analysis in qualitative research. Clarke and Braun's approach to TA, which is used in this thesis, is described by Clarke and Braun (2013) as "a method for identifying and analysing patterns in qualitative data," and that it is just an analytical method rather than a methodology which can be used flexibly with other theoretical frameworks (Braun & Clarke, 2014).

It is a relatively easy method for novice researchers unfamiliar with more complex qualitative analysis and therefore was suitable in this research in which most previous experience of the researcher involved quantitative data. TA has also begun to gain the recognition of alternative methodologies such as grounded theory and interpretative phenomenological analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2013).

Braun and Clarke (2006) previously outlined six phases of TA, but suggest that these phases are not linear and in fact a recursive process, in which one can proceed to the following phase or repeat a previous phase. The following is a description of the six phase process.

- 1. Familiarisation with the data** - The researcher becomes immersed in the data, continually reading and becoming familiar with it. Initial observations should be noted.
- 2. Coding** – The researcher goes through all their data (data corpus) generating labels for important features of the data relevant to the research.
- 3. Searching for themes** - Themes are coherent and meaningful patterns found in the data relevant to the research. Themes must be constructed by the researcher by sorting the large list of codes into meaningful patterns of codes with similarities or connections. Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) suggest creating themes makes the data more manageable and easier to analyse.
- 4. Reviewing themes** - The researcher needs to decide if the potential themes reflect the meaning of their data. It may be necessary to collapse two themes together, split a theme into multiple sub-themes or remove a theme completely.
- 5. Defining and naming themes** - The researcher should ask themselves "What story does each theme tell?" by identifying the 'essence' of each theme. It is

then that the researcher should give names to each theme that are concise and provide the reader with a sense of what the theme is about.

- 6. Writing up** - The researcher should provide a concise, coherent and interesting analytical narrative about their data, using each theme that has emerged from the data.

The end result of a TA should focus on the most relevant patterns of meanings present in the data for the themes to emerge. Such patterns may refer to manifest content - something directly observable in the data, or more latent content - patterns found by implicit references to the same or a similar meaning. They can also be deductive - drawn from a theoretical idea that the researcher brings to the research, or inductive - drawn from the raw data itself (Joffe, 2011).

Using TA, this research was able to construct themes from the qualitative data and used them to compare and inform upon the quantitative data, as outlined in the mixed methodology of Sequential Explanatory Strategy in section 3.1.1.

Chapter 4: Quantitative Results & Analysis

As indicated in section 3.3.4, the survey attracted a total of 1188 respondents that began the survey and completed some sections. As a result, the analysis was based on two datasets.

Dataset One included all respondents that completed up to, and including, part three (or the first half of the survey), with a total of 1028 respondents; ensuring that the respondent at least indicated their association to grieving, and allowed for analysis of their motivations for playing MMORPGs and types of actions they believed to be grieving. Dataset Two included all respondents that finished the entire survey, a total of 656 respondents; allowing for accurate details regarding the causes, implications and magnitude of grieving.

All tables have conditional formatting that displays the result as a darker shade of grey dependent upon the increase in percentage. This gives the reader a clearer indication of results at a quick glance before reading into the figures. For example, there are more males than females that responded to the survey and it is clearly indicated not only by the actual figures, but by darker shade of grey indicating a higher percentage.

4.1 Demographics

In Table 1, the demographics of the respondents from both datasets are shown. The survey respondents' gender from this study's first dataset was predominantly male (85.6%, n=1028) and dropped slightly in dataset two (82.9%, n=656). This value is within a few percent of other similar studies (Griffiths, Davies, & Chappell, 2003; Parsons, 2005; Williams et al., 2008). Even though the female audience is in the minority, it is still a significant portion of the audience to be studied (Ghuman & Griffiths, 2012).

In regards to age, larger quantities of respondents were aged between 22 and 30 (43.4%), but an average age could not be deduced as the survey only allowed pre-set ranges to choose from. In other studies the average age was found to be 33 (Williams et al., 2008), and 25.7 (Yee, 2001).

According to the educational statistics, the respondents of this survey are highly educated with almost half of the respondents having completed a university degree, either an undergraduate university degree (dataset one: 34.0%, dataset two: 34.6%) or a postgraduate degree (dataset one: 15.3%, dataset two: 15.2%). This follows the

trend from previous studies stating that their respondents were also more educated than the general United States population (Williams et al., 2008).

Table 1: Demographics

	Dataset 1 (n=1028)		Dataset 2 (n=656)	
	n	%	n	%
Gender				
Female	148	14.4%	112	17.1%
Male	880	85.6%	544	82.9%
Age				
16 to 17	91	8.9%	51	7.8%
18 to 21	246	23.9%	141	21.5%
22 to 30	446	43.4%	290	44.2%
31 and over	245	23.8%	174	26.5%
Highest completed education				
Other	36	3.5%	28	4.3%
Primary	47	4.6%	19	2.9%
Secondary (High School)	317	30.8%	199	30.3%
Tertiary – Vocational Qualification	121	11.8%	83	12.7%
Tertiary – Undergraduate Degree	350	34.0%	227	34.6%
Tertiary – Postgraduate Degree	157	15.3%	100	15.2%
Ethnicity				
Not Answered	53	5.2%	37	5.6%
Caucasian (European)	784	76.3%	500	76.2%
All Other Ethnicity	234	22.8%	139	21.2%
Sexual Orientation				
Not Answered	176	17.1%	99	15.1%
Bisexual	58	5.6%	40	6.1%
Gay/Lesbian	26	2.5%	22	3.4%
Heterosexual	745	72.5%	478	72.9%
Transsexual/Transgender	12	1.2%	8	1.2%
Other	11	1.1%	9	1.4%

Note: Ethnicity was reduced to three categories as most had a low number of participants. The full version can be viewed in Appendix C.

Referring to Table 2, the respondents were global with larger concentrations residing in the United States (dataset one: 42.9%, dataset two: 44.1%), the United Kingdom (dataset one: 9.5%, dataset two: 9.6%), Australia (dataset one: 6.5%, dataset two: 6.6%) and Canada (dataset one: 6.4%, dataset two: 6.4%), matching the large percentage of Caucasian ethnicity (Table 1) of the respondents (dataset one: 73.6%, dataset two: 76.2%). This is in between the United States census of the white population at 72.4% (Humes, Jones, & Ramirez, 2012) and a study of *EverQuest 2* players at 87.6% (Williams et al., 2008).

Table 2: Country of residence

Country of Residence	Dataset 1 (n=1028)		Dataset 2 (n=656)	
	n	%	n	%
United States	440	42.9%	289	44.1%
United Kingdom	97	9.5%	63	9.6%
Australia	67	6.5%	43	6.6%
Canada	66	6.4%	42	6.4%
Germany	38	3.7%	24	3.7%
Denmark	36	3.5%	15	2.3%
Netherlands	34	3.3%	24	3.7%
Sweden	31	3.0%	19	2.9%
Finland	18	1.8%	13	2.0%
Belgium	14	1.4%	9	1.4%
Norway	14	1.4%	8	1.2%
New Zealand	13	1.3%	9	1.4%
Poland	13	1.3%	5	0.8%
France	12	1.2%	12	1.8%
Other Countries (< 10)	135	13.2%	81	12.3%

Note: Other countries (< 10) refers to the total number of respondents from countries that had a response rate of less than 10 participants. The full version can be viewed in Appendix C.

In Table 3 below, the respondents' use of MMORPGs from both datasets are shown. The respondents were quite experienced with the MMORPG genre with the majority of them having played them for 5 to 10 years. Hours currently played per week is a little lower than other studies (Williams et al., 2008; Yee, 2001), but this study also looks at peak played hours which are much higher. Griefing may have a direct impact on hours played by an individual subjected to the griefing actions. This issue is explored further later in this chapter.

Table 3: MMORPG usage

Preferred MMORPG ruleset	Dataset 1 (n=1028)		Dataset 2 (n=656)	
	n	%	n	%
Player vs. Player servers	457	44.5%	256	39.0%
Player vs. Environment servers	441	42.9%	304	46.3%
Role Playing servers	130	12.6%	96	14.6%
Hours per week (currently)	n	%	n	%
Less than 10	407	39.6%	255	38.9%
11 - 20	267	26.0%	176	26.8%
21 - 30	194	18.9%	134	20.4%
31 - 40	78	7.6%	44	6.7%
41 - 50	29	2.8%	15	2.3%
More than 50	53	5.2%	32	4.9%
Hours per week (at peak)	n	%	n	%
Less than 10	37	3.6%	19	2.9%
11 - 20	94	9.1%	65	9.9%
21 - 30	221	21.5%	140	21.3%
31 - 40	234	22.8%	142	21.6%
41 - 50	146	14.2%	101	15.4%
More than 50	296	28.8%	189	28.8%
MMORPG experience	n	%	n	%
Less than 2 years	91	8.9%	54	8.2%
2 - 5 years	233	22.7%	157	23.9%
5 - 10 years	508	49.4%	319	48.6%
More than 10 years	196	19.1%	126	19.2%

Note: Rulesets were defined in the survey with precise definitions. Player vs. Player servers - refers to PvP servers that allows players to attack each other; occasionally with specific restrictions. Player vs. Environment servers - refers to PvE servers, in which players cannot attack other players unless it is consensual. Role Playing servers refers to those servers designated for players wishing to play "in character" at all times.

For some survey questions, only the respondents that more regularly performed griefing (referred to as griefers) and/or were regularly subjected to griefing (referred to as the grieved) were analysed as these respondents associated themselves strongly to those types. Respondents were regarded as griefers if they reported performing griefing on half or more of their logged-in time. Griefing becomes a regular activity for these players; as much as or more than the defined goals of the game. A similar definition was used to define the grieved as shown in the final rows of Table 4.

Table 4: Association to griefing

Performed Griefing (Griever)		Dataset 1 (n=1028)		Dataset 2 (n=656)	
		n	%	n	%
Irregular	Never	305	29.7%	225	34.3%
	Very rarely	402	39.1%	263	40.1%
	On occasion	225	21.9%	115	17.5%
Regularly	About half of the time	41	4.0%	27	4.1%
	Most of the time	25	2.4%	12	1.8%
	All of the time	30	2.9%	14	2.1%
	Total	96	9.3%	53	8.0%
Subjected to Griefing (Griefed)		n	%	n	%
Irregular	Never	30	2.9%	14	2.1%
	Very rarely	283	27.5%	180	27.4%
	On occasion	549	53.4%	362	55.2%
Regularly	About half of the time	87	8.5%	57	8.7%
	Most of the time	56	5.4%	30	4.6%
	All of the time	23	2.2%	13	2.0%
	Total	166	16.1%	100	15.3%

Note: Irregular and Regular refers to how often the respondent is associated to each of performed and subjected to griefing while logged in to MMORPGs

It was observed that there was only a small percentage of difference between males and females that are subjected to griefing, although males perform griefing at a higher rate (Table 5). This somewhat matches previous identification that griefing is primarily a male activity (Tucker, 2011). It should be noted that some players that regularly perform griefing were also regularly subjected to griefing, and in Figure 7 (based on dataset one) and Figure 8 (based on dataset two) this is represented by the intersection between the two groups. In terms of common (real-life) bullying and victimisation, this type of person that is both a bully and a victim of bullying is called a bully-victim (Marini, Dane & Volk, 2008). However, this terminology is unsuitable for this study as not all griefed players are victims, and the 'bully' in an MMORPG is primarily called a griefer. In light of this, due to a lack of any pre-defined terminology, this thesis shall refer to the third group as "intersectors" (n=25 for dataset one, and n=12 for dataset two).

Table 5: Gender difference regarding grieved and grievers (based on Dataset 2)

Amount	Grieved		Griever	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Never	4.5%	1.7%	53.6%	30.3%
Very rarely	21.4%	28.7%	34.8%	41.2%
On occasion	62.5%	53.7%	7.1%	19.7%
About half of the time	5.4%	9.4%	2.7%	4.4%
Most of the time	5.4%	4.4%	0.9%	2.0%
All of the time	0.9%	2.2%	0.9%	2.4%

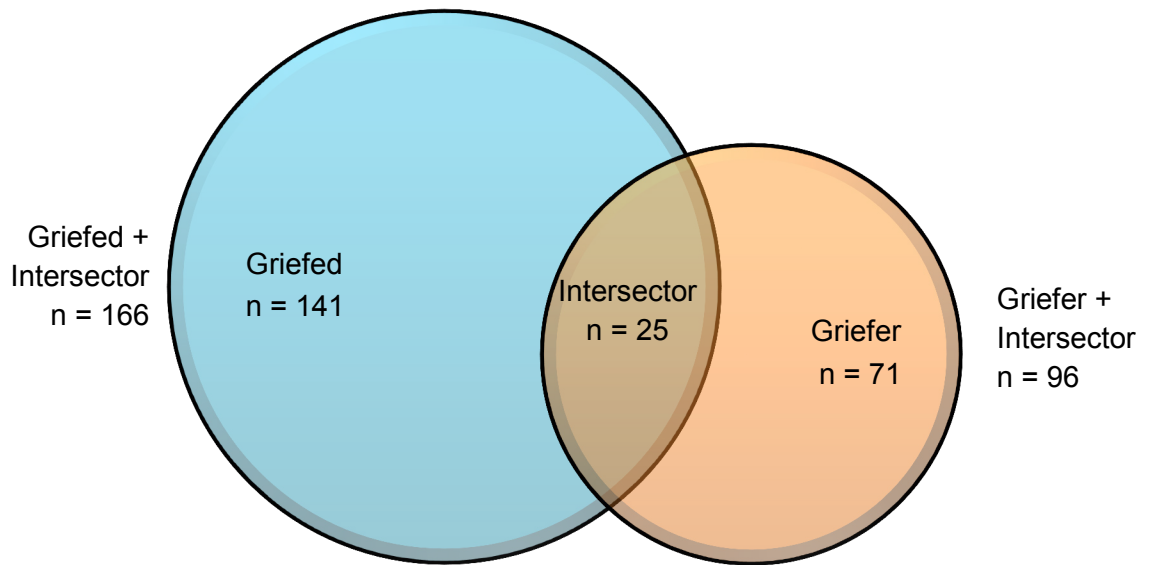


Figure 7: Number of grievers, grieved and intersector (Dataset One)

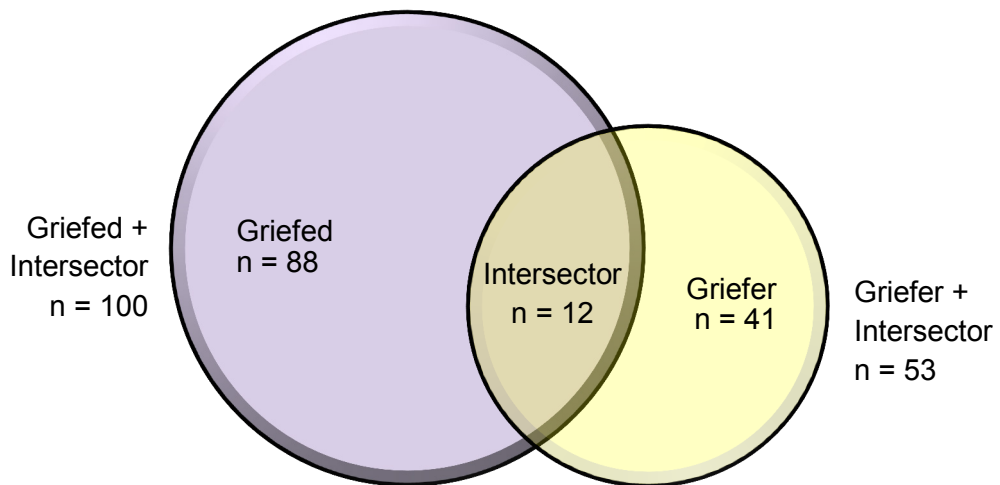


Figure 8: Number of grievers, grieved and intersector (Dataset Two)

4.2 Causes of Griefing

4.2.1 Introduction to Causes

Referring back to section 1.2 and the research questions, the question related to causes asked “Why does a player cause grief to other players and how do they select their target?” Many questions were asked of the respondents in the survey regarding the causes of griefing and this section of Chapter Four analyses the responses. These questions were explored from the perceptions of the different demographics outlined in Tables 1, 2 and 3, and the different associations to griefing of Table 4, obtained through the survey.

Before analysis was conducted on the data from dataset two with questions specifically directed at the causes of griefing, some analysis was conducted on dataset one outlined in the previous section. While no questions were directly asked about the causes of griefing during the portion of the survey on which dataset one is based, some deductions could still be made. With a larger sample size in dataset one, it would have been inefficient not to analyse the data for anything relatable to the thesis.

After this analysis had been conducted, dataset two was analysed as the participants that completed the survey (and therefore were added to dataset two) had answered all questions in part four of the survey related to the causes of griefing (see Figure 9).

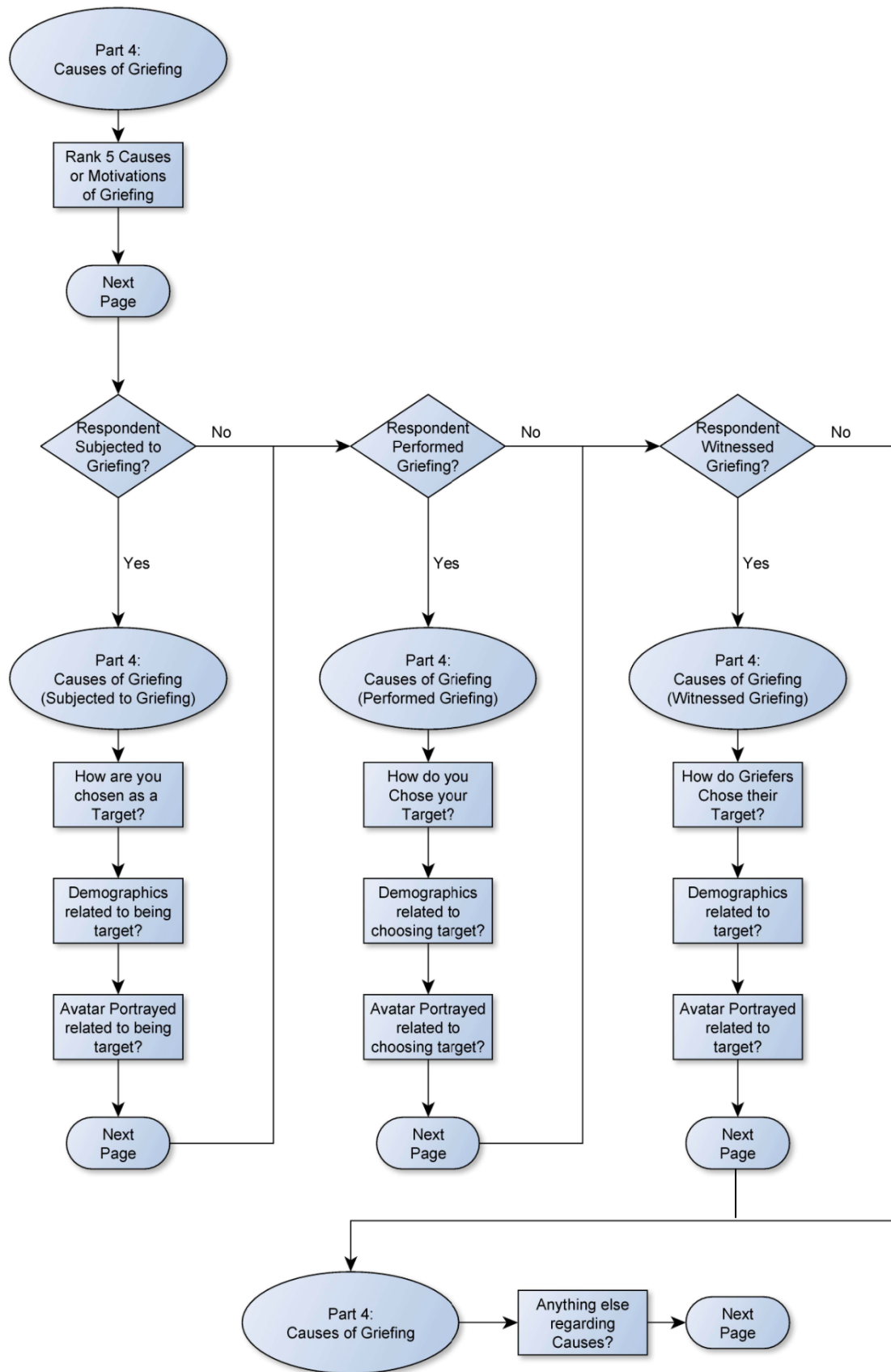


Figure 9: Survey question flow from part four of the survey

4.2.2 Results

4.2.2.1 Griefing Perceptions

The survey questioned respondents about a set of actions that were identified as griefing in previous studies (see the literature review in Chapter Two), to discover which actions were considered griefing by the MMORPG community. The following list of 15 actions and their definitions were included in the survey:

1. **Verbal harassment** - Intentional misuse of the chat interface or voice system in order to offend, harass, insult, threaten, or humiliate another player.
2. **Spamming** - Intentionally filling a chat channel repeatedly with messages of low relevance, utility, or messages that are against the game rules (such as in-game currency selling).
3. **Kill stealing** - When a player attempts to kill a mob that is already engaged in combat with another player, in order to reap their reward of experience, items or in-game currency.
4. **Ninja looting** - Taking loot that was earned by another player, by speed, guile, or a cheat. Typically, a player quickly loots mob corpses that they should not be looting.
5. **Player killing / ganking** - A player seeks out and kills players that are at a disadvantage. Most commonly they attack players with little health, and/or that are already engaged in combat.
6. **Corpse / spawn camping** - A player repeatedly kills the same individual multiple times, remaining in a location where the victim will respawn or resurrect (usually in a weakened state) and cannot escape the attack.
7. **Mob camping** - When a player remains in a location where a particular mob spawns in order to get items that only drop from this mob.
8. **Mob luring / training** - A player pulls or leads a hostile NPC or creature along behind them and attempts to get it to attack another player who does not desire that engagement.
9. **Player blocking** - A player obstructs another player's escape path to intentionally cause that character's death or confinement. A player may also obstruct another player's view or path from in-game resources (such as items, Non-Player Characters (NPC) and mailboxes).
10. **Exploiting loopholes** - Unintended flaw in the game that a player exploits to their advantage. In the past loopholes such as duplicating items, activating

items through solid walls and accessing restricted content have been exploited by some players.

11. **Preying on new players** - The killing of new and inexperienced players for fun, even though there is little direct benefit from attacker to the victim.
12. **Scamming** - Any method by which a player attempts to con another player out of something. This could include swindling items using fraudulent schemes or unfair trades.
13. **Team disruption** - When a player deliberately performs actions detrimental to their team, including friendly fire, wasting key game elements, luring unwanted mobs and colluding with the opposition.
14. **Event disruption** - When an event organized by players is purposefully interrupted by others.
15. **Role-play disruption** - Intentionally talking out of character to disrupt players that are role-playing their characters.

The analysis and results were published (Achterbosch, Miller, & Vamplew, 2013) and presented at the Interactive Entertainment conference titled “Matters of Life and Death” in Melbourne, 2013. The respondents’ demographics for this paper used the data from dataset one as shown in Tables 1 to 4 (of 4.1’s Demographics section).

A cross-tabulation was performed against the various actions that were considered grieving by past research to discover the differences among the different types of respondents. Comparing the results of Figure 10’s grievers and grieved, the overall picture reveals that grievers believe that many actions they perform are *not* a form of grieving more often than the grieved do. On average, over half (53.4%, n=166) of the grieved (including intersector) gave an answer of 'always' to whether the 15 stated actions were grieving actions or not, compared to the grievers (also including the intersector) average of 35.5% (n=96). On the other end of the scale, grievers gave an answer of 'never' to whether the 15 stated actions were grieving actions or not 28.4% of the time (n=96), compared to the grieved average of 14.5% (n=166).

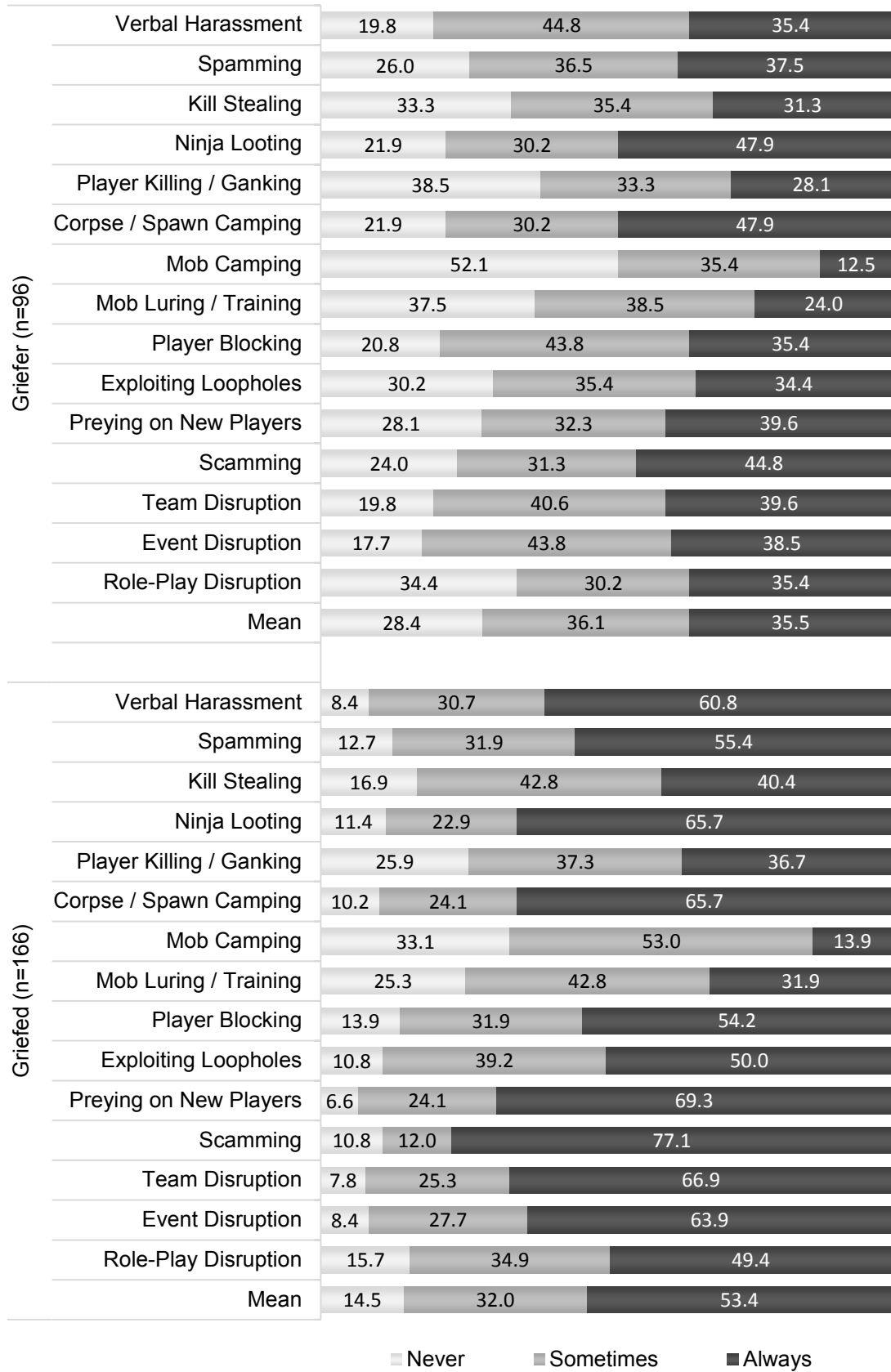


Figure 10: Percentage of griefer versus grieved and their perception about whether an action was griefering or not

Of particular interest are the categories weighted in favour of 'never' or 'always' from the perspectives of griefers and the grieved. Nine of the 15 actions were weighted more towards 'always' being a form of griefing by both self-proclaimed griefers and grieved; These were verbal harassment, spamming, ninja looting, corpse/spawn camping, player blocking, preying on new players, scamming, team disruption, and event disruption. Even so, the grieved players still rate them much higher than the griefers as a form of griefing. For example while 35.4% of griefers rated verbal harassment as always being a form of griefing in MMORPGs, a larger percentage of 60.8% of the grieved placed it in this category. These results support the previous research identification of these nine actions as forms of griefing.

The self-proclaimed grieved (n=166) were only skewed once towards one of these 15 actions 'never' being a form of griefing, and that was mob camping, with 33.1% in favour. However griefers placed this higher in favour of 'never' at 52.1%, also being the highest rated 'never'. This suggests that it would depend on the circumstances of each particular incidence of mob camping as to whether an individual believes it to be griefing or not, but compared to the rest of the actions, it is more likely to not be considered griefing. The interview participants were asked specifically about mob camping, and generally about other actions and these are discussed in the next chapter.

In contrast to the griefing subjects, the griefers themselves weighted towards 'never' to the 15 actions as forms of griefing more often. In fact, player killing, mob camping, and mob luring were rated by griefers more often as not being a form of griefing at all than the other actions. Griefers (n=96) rated 'never' for player killing 38.5% of the time, mob camping 52.1%, and mob luring 37.5%; this is opposed to the grieved (n=166) rating of 'never' being 25.9%, 33.1% and 25.3% for these actions respectively.

There were five types of actions in particular that the grieved were much more likely than the griefers (by approximately an additional 25 to 32%) to indicate as always griefing. These actions were scamming, preying on new players, team disruption, event disruption and verbal harassment.

4.2.2.2 Motivational Factors for Playing MMORPGs

The survey questioned respondents about a set of motivational factors that influence why they play MMORPGs. This set of motivational factors was devised by Yee (2002), refined for accuracy (Yee, 2006b), and used to discover the demographics and motivations of MMORPG players (Williams et al., 2008). The motivational model is described in more detail in section 3.1.2, including each sub-factor definition. In brief, the three main factors were broken down into ten more manageable sub-factors. Respondents were questioned on the full subset of ten motivational factors as listed below:

Achievement:

- Advancement
- Mechanics
- Competition

Social:

- Socializing
- Relationship
- Teamwork

Immersion:

- Discovery
- Role-Playing
- Customisation
- Escapism

The motivational factors were used to discover the motivations for playing MMORPGs among those whom identified themselves as those that perform griefing (griefers) and those whom have been subjected to griefing (griefed). This analysis was subsequently published (Achterbosch, Miller, Turville, & Vamplew, 2014), and the analysis and results have been summarised below. The respondents' demographics for this peer-reviewed paper used the data from dataset one as shown in Tables 1 to 4, as well as the associations to griefing outlined in Figure 7 (of 4.1's Demographics section).

To establish that the data obtained was in line with other MMORPG studies the mean value for each motivational factor was tested against gender (Table 6). The results indicated that males prefer achievement over females, especially the competition which can include challenging others, provocation and domination, while females prefer social

and immersion over males, in particular role-playing and escaping real-life rate higher among females. When comparing to Yee and Williams study (2008) of a general MMORPG populace sample the gender's motivational factors align.

Table 6: Motivation factors by gender

Motivation Factor		Male		Female	
		\bar{x}	s	\bar{x}	s
Achievement	Advancement	3.84	1.144	3.51	1.237
	Mechanics	3.76	1.159	3.36	1.207
	Competition	3.42	1.347	2.83	1.440
Social	Socializing	3.52	1.180	3.71	1.168
	Relationship	2.65	1.296	2.84	1.344
	Teamwork	3.61	1.184	3.66	1.175
Immersion	Discovery	3.79	1.221	4.04	1.166
	Role-Playing	2.19	1.300	2.60	1.442
	Customization	3.52	1.296	3.86	1.265
	Escapism	3.28	1.426	3.70	1.383

Note: Values of 1 indicate that it is not a motivating factor up to 5 which indicate a highly motivating factor. \bar{x} = mean, s = standard deviation

Rather than determining the motivational factors of the general MMORPG community as had been conducted in the past, this section identifies the motivational factors in playing MMORPGs of the previously defined grievers, grieved and intersector (Figure 7). This comparison was firstly separated by gender, as outlined in Table 7.

Table 7: Mean values of motivation factors by gender and association to grieving

Factor	Gender	Griever			Grieved		
		Female n=12	Male n=84	Both n=96	Female n=20	Male n=146	Both n=166
Advancement		3.67	3.70	3.70	3.45	3.84	3.79
Mechanics		3.50	3.71	3.69	3.30	3.86	3.80
Competition		4.42	4.25	4.27	3.05	3.39	3.35
Socializing		3.50	3.31	3.33	3.55	3.60	3.59
Relationship		2.92	2.44	2.50	2.90	2.86	2.86
Teamwork		3.58	3.45	3.47	3.90	3.58	3.62
Discovery		3.50	3.62	3.60	3.75	3.90	3.88
Role-Playing		2.92	2.05	2.16	2.60	2.29	2.33
Customization		3.92	3.57	3.61	3.90	3.94	3.93
Escapism		3.42	2.96	3.02	4.00	3.45	3.52

Note: Values of 1 indicate that it is not a motivating factor up to 5 which indicate a highly motivating factor.

Observationally, competition was the highest rated motivational factor among grievers of both genders. On average, grievers also rated the other two achievement category motivation factors; mechanics and competition higher than everything else. In contrast, those subjected to grieving, the grieved, regularly rated one of the immersion categories as the highest motivation in playing MMORPGs, with customisation (the interest of customising your avatar) most likely to be the highest rated. The two achievement factors, advancement and mechanics, while not the highest valued factors of the grieved, were still rated quite highly on average. In light of this, both grievers and the grieved enjoy advancing their character's power and virtual wealth as well as understanding the mechanics of the game, and are motivated by these aspects to continue playing MMORPGs.

In relation to gender, female grievers are much more likely to rate role-playing ($\bar{x}=2.92$) higher than male grievers ($\bar{x}=2.05$). To a lesser degree female grievers also rate relationship ($\bar{x}=2.92$) and escapism ($\bar{x}=3.42$) higher than males ($\bar{x}=2.44$ and $\bar{x}=2.96$ respectively). Female grievers are more motivated slightly more motivated than male grievers by factors other than the achievement factors. The grieved females are more similar to the grieved males, except in the case of the achievement category that indicates they are less likely to be motivated by the achievement factors than male grieved players. It must be noted that the regular female grievers only numbered 12 from the pool of 148 female respondents (8.1%, $n=148$). Further research with more female grievers would help to confirm these motivations.

Next the motivational factors of different age groups were analysed against grievers and the grieved (Table 8). competition was regularly rated high among all age groups of grievers, it was at its peak among 18 to 21 year olds, and slightly less so for 22 to 30 year olds. The grieved once again valued immersion categories the highest, but among the 18 to 30 year groups achievement factors were also quite high.

Table 8: Mean values of motivation factors by age and association to grieving

Factor	Age	Griever				Griefed			
		16-17 n=12	18-21 n=30	22-30 n=39	31+ n=15	16-17 n=20	18-21 n=49	22-30 n=63	31+ n=34
Advancement		4.08	4.03	3.49	3.27	3.60	4.00	3.79	3.59
Mechanics		3.33	3.97	3.77	3.20	3.80	4.02	3.71	3.62
Competition		3.67	4.50	4.38	4.00	3.35	3.80	3.22	2.94
Socializing		3.67	3.47	3.36	2.73	4.00	3.73	3.40	3.50
Relationship		2.58	2.63	2.56	2.00	3.20	2.98	2.73	2.74
Teamwork		3.00	3.63	3.69	2.93	3.65	3.43	3.71	3.71
Discovery		3.75	3.70	3.67	3.13	4.15	3.71	3.78	4.15
Role-Playing		2.00	2.33	2.18	1.87	2.65	2.08	2.24	2.65
Customization		3.42	3.80	3.41	3.93	3.75	3.94	3.79	4.29
Escapism		2.83	2.83	3.00	3.60	3.50	3.57	3.54	3.41

Note: Values of 1 indicate that it is not a motivating factor up to 5 which indicate a highly motivating factor.

Table 9 compared the motivational factors among players that log in and play different amounts of hours per week in MMORPGs versus their association to grieving.

Competition was the highest rated motivational factor among all grievers that spend different amounts of time each week playing MMORPGs, with the griefed alternating between discovery and customization as the most motivating factor depending on hours played.

Table 9: Mean values of motivation factors by hours per week (currently) and association to grieving

Hours per Week	Factor	Griever				Griefed			
		<=10 n=34	11-20 n=21	21-30 n=21	>30 n=20	<=10 n=60	11-20 n=40	21-30 n=41	>30 n=25
Advancement		3.65	3.43	3.71	4.05	3.67	3.83	3.98	3.72
Mechanics		3.24	3.86	4.29	3.65	3.70	3.72	4.07	3.68
Competition		3.97	4.48	4.52	4.30	3.37	3.37	3.22	3.48
Socializing		2.85	3.76	3.67	3.85	3.48	3.57	3.93	3.32
Relationship		2.15	2.86	2.62	2.60	2.92	2.63	3.24	2.48
Teamwork		3.26	3.81	3.43	3.50	3.58	3.47	3.90	3.48
Discovery		3.53	3.71	3.52	3.70	3.90	3.87	4.27	3.20
Role-Playing		2.21	2.38	1.86	2.15	2.35	2.23	2.49	2.16
Customization		3.35	3.71	3.81	3.75	3.80	3.90	4.10	4.04
Escapism		2.82	3.24	3.05	3.10	3.37	3.43	3.56	3.96

Note: Values of 1 indicate that it is not a motivating factor up to 5 which indicate a highly motivating factor.

Finally, Table 10 compared the motivational factors between grievers and the griefed with varying experience within the MMORPG genre (in amount of years having played

MMORPGs). Once more it was observed that griefers of various experience valued achievement factors and grieved mainly immersion.

Table 10: Mean values of motivation factors by MMORPG experience in years and association to griefing

Experience Factor	Griever				Grieved			
	<2 n=6	2-5 n=19	5-10 n=42	>10 n=29	<2 n=18	2-5 n=41	5-10 n=75	>10 n=32
Advancement	4.33	3.42	3.81	3.59	3.67	4.05	3.83	3.44
Mechanics	2.83	3.89	3.69	3.72	3.50	3.83	3.87	3.75
Competition	3.83	3.74	4.52	4.34	3.22	3.37	3.45	3.16
Socializing	2.50	3.37	3.67	3.00	3.17	3.56	3.64	3.75
Relationship	2.17	2.47	2.76	2.21	2.39	2.88	2.87	3.09
Teamwork	2.67	3.68	3.52	3.41	3.22	3.63	3.63	3.81
Discovery	4.00	3.37	3.60	3.69	3.72	4.00	3.77	4.06
Role-Playing	2.83	1.89	2.19	2.14	2.83	2.54	2.08	2.34
Customization	3.67	3.53	3.52	3.79	3.56	4.12	3.83	4.16
Escapism	2.33	3.16	2.79	3.41	2.94	3.73	3.59	3.41

Note: Values of 1 indicate that it is not a motivating factor up to 5 which indicate a highly motivating factor.

It was also indicative from Table 11 that the more often the respondent expressed that they caused grief, the higher competition was rated. Overall this indicates that the competition motivational factor is valued considerably higher for griefers that perform griefing more often. Within the immersion category it was observed that the more often the respondent expressed that they were subjected to griefing, the higher the customization mean rating rose. There are two possible hypotheses for this outcome. One, the more a player enjoys customizing their in-game character, the more attached they become (Ducheneaut, Wen, Yee & Wadley 2009), and therefore it is conceivable that they are more susceptible to griefing or more likely to regard other players' actions as griefing. Two, the way the player customizes their avatar may be a reason for the griefer to select them as a target of griefing. The second theory was targeted as a question that is analysed in section 4.2.2.6.

Table 11: Mean values of motivation factors by association to grieving and the regularity of each association

		Amount				
		Very Rarely	On occasion	About half of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
Griever		n=402	n=225	n=41	n=25	n=30
	Advancement	3.87	3.91	3.76	4.04	3.33
	Mechanics	3.72	3.77	3.76	3.68	3.60
	Competition	3.30	3.88	4.15	4.60	4.17
	Socializing	3.62	3.59	3.61	2.96	3.27
	Relationship	2.83	2.70	2.61	2.52	2.33
	Teamwork	3.64	3.63	3.73	3.12	3.40
	Discovery	3.84	3.76	4.00	3.36	3.27
	Role-Playing	2.24	2.13	2.41	2.12	1.83
	Customization	3.61	3.47	4.00	3.36	3.30
Escapism	3.45	3.31	3.00	2.76	3.27	
Griefed		n=283	n=549	n=87	n=56	n=23
	Advancement	3.81	3.78	3.85	3.84	3.43
	Mechanics	3.67	3.70	3.70	4.02	3.61
	Competition	3.38	3.31	3.23	3.50	3.43
	Socializing	3.46	3.60	3.60	3.70	3.30
	Relationship	2.49	2.76	2.79	3.00	2.78
	Teamwork	3.52	3.67	3.82	3.55	3.04
	Discovery	3.73	3.88	3.93	3.93	3.57
	Role-Playing	2.20	2.25	2.47	2.21	2.04
	Customization	3.36	3.58	3.89	3.96	4.04
Escapism	3.05	3.47	3.59	3.30	3.78	

Note: Values of 1 indicate that it is not a motivating factor up to 5 which indicate a highly motivating factor.

4.2.2.3 Motivations to Cause Grief

Part four of the survey (Figure 9) was built solely to examine the causes of grieving. The analysis for this section of the thesis used dataset two as the participants that completed the survey (n=656) had answered all questions in part four of the survey related to the causes of grieving.

All participants of dataset two regardless of their association to grieving were asked the question, “What do you think is likely to cause or motivate a player to carry out an act of grieving?” They were then asked to “Please place these statements in ranked order from 1 to 5, the first being the most likely statement.”

The options available to participants were:

The player causes grief _____

- a. To feel powerful.
- b. To gain a reputation.
- c. When in a group as they feel safer with allies.
- d. In retaliation to another's acts.
- e. Due to dissatisfaction with game or developer.
- f. Due to the anonymity in MMORPGs.
- g. For real-world monetary gain.
- h. For virtual monetary gain.
- i. For personal enjoyment.
- j. Due to peer pressure.
- k. Unknowingly or accidentally.

With 11 options and only five choices to make, participants were forced to focus on those answers they thought were the most applicable.

Referring to Figure 11 (on the next page), it is immediately apparent that respondents rated option c ("The player causes grief when in a group as they feel safer with allies") as the highest ranked reason a player will cause grief, with 38.0% (n=656) of respondents choosing this as rank one, and 93.9% (n=656) choosing this option in their top five. This was followed by option f ("The player causes grief due to the anonymity in MMORPGs") with 84.6%, and option k ("The player causes grief unknowingly or accidentally") with 83.2% of respondents placing this option in their top five reasons a player causes grief.

The least likely reason identified by the respondents for a player to cause grief was option e ("The player causes grief due to dissatisfaction with game or developer") with just 6.7% of all respondents placing it in their top five. This was followed by option b ("The player causes grief to gain a reputation") with 15.4%, and option j ("The player causes grief due to peer pressure") with 19.8% of respondents placing this option in their top five reasons a player causes grief.

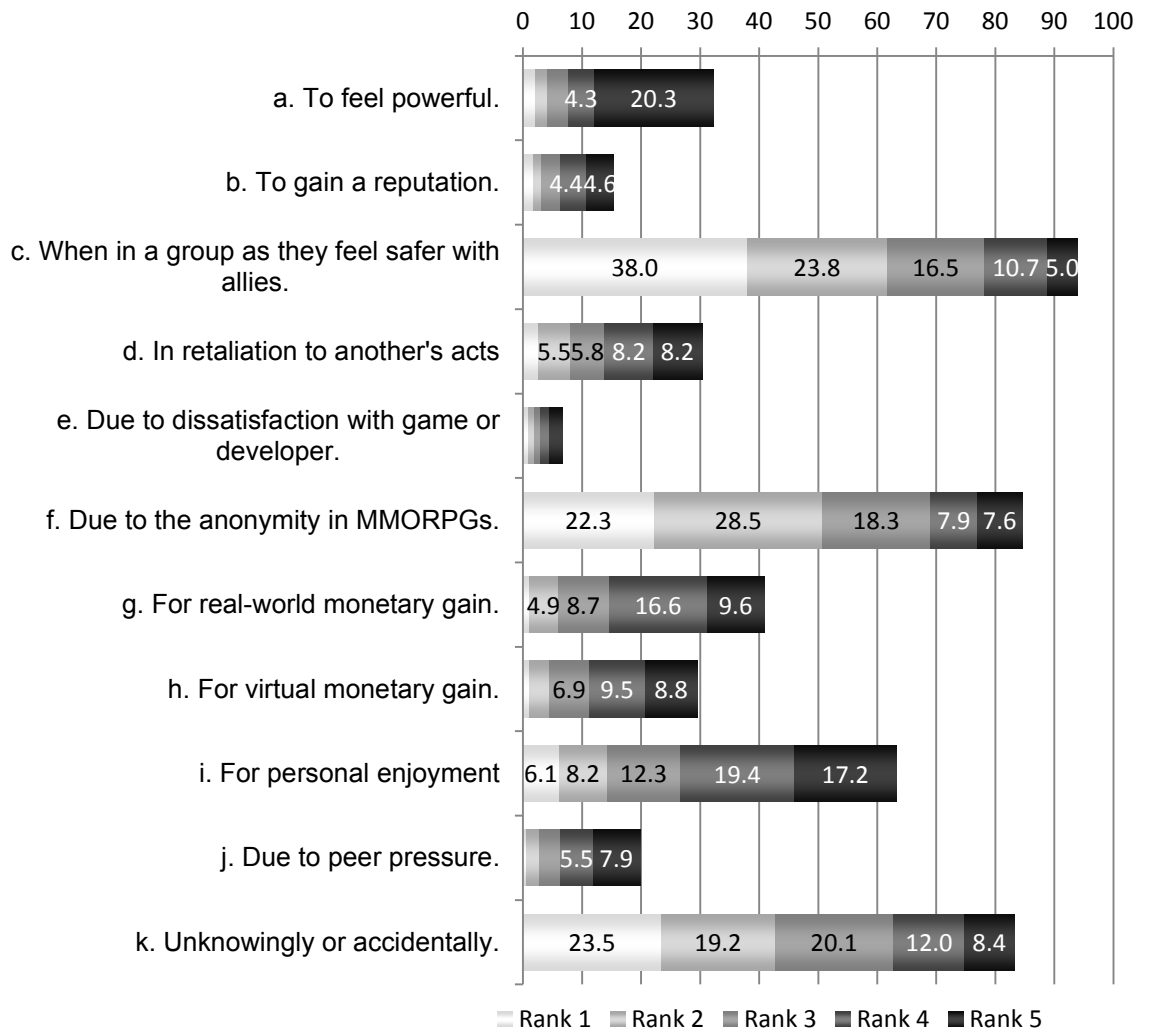


Figure 11: The percentage of respondents (n=656) that ranked the top five reasons likely to motivate a player to carry out an act of griefing

Looking at the results from the different perspectives of the grieved, the grievers and the intersector (Figure 12 on the next page for all ranks, and Table 12 below for just the totals) shows that their overall rankings did not differentiate much at all. The primary difference is that for grievers, option i (“The player causes grief for personal enjoyment”) moved up two ranks, from fourth to the second highest ranking (Table 13) of why a player causes grief with a total of 80.5% (n=41). Two thirds (66.7% of n=12) of the intersector (those that both indicated they were grievers and grieved) ranked this same option in their top five, while slightly less of the grieved, 59.0% (n=88) ranked personal enjoyment in their top five reasons of causes griefing. This indicates that more of the grievers see the actions of griefing as an enjoyable activity, while the grieved are identifying other reasons why they have been attacked.

While not highly ranked, the grieved also indicated that players are griefing to gain a reputation more than the grievers and intersector indicated (19.3%, n=88 versus 9.7%, n=41 & 8.3%, n=12). One of the higher ranked reasons to cause grief, “Due to the anonymity in MMORPGs” showed a difference between the grieved (81.8%, n=88) and the grievers (61.0%, n=41). Finally, the other reason that varied between the groups was the option that players are causing grief “for real-world monetary gain”. The grieved were less likely to rank this reason in the top five reasons with 40.9% (n=88) placing it in their top five compared to the grievers of 58.5% (n=41).

Table 12: What is likely to motivate a player to carry out an act of griefing? Totals of ranks 1 to 5 are shown in Figure 12

The player causes grief...	Totals (of Figure 12)		
	Grieved	Griever	Intersector
a. To feel powerful.	26.2	26.7	25
b. To gain a reputation.	19.3	9.7	8.3
c. When in a group as they feel safer with allies.	95.5	92.7	100
d. In retaliation to another's acts.	33	36.6	33.3
e. Due to dissatisfaction with game or developer.	11.4	7.3	0
f. Due to the anonymity in MMORPGs.	81.8	61	75
g. For real-world monetary gain.	40.9	58.5	41.7
h. For virtual monetary gain.	31.8	24.4	66.7
i. For personal enjoyment	59	80.5	66.7
j. Due to peer pressure.	22.7	26.8	16.6
k. Unknowingly or accidentally.	78.4	75.6	66.7

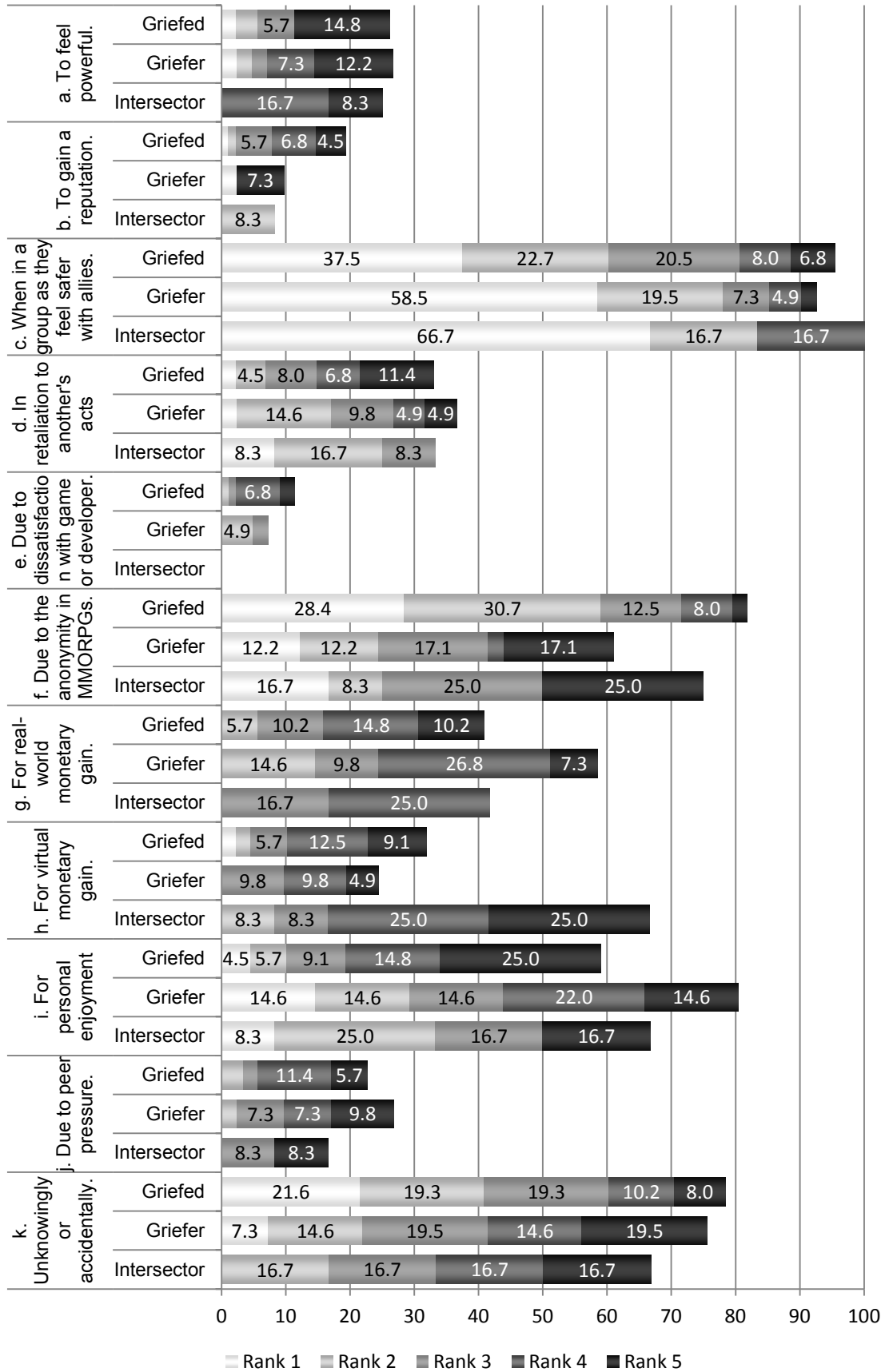


Figure 12: The percentage of respondents (separated by their association to grieving) that ranked the top five reasons likely to motivate a player to carry out an act of grieving

4.2.2.4 Targets of Griefing

Determining why a player has been targeted for griefing may indicate the reason why they have been griefed. The analysis for this section of the research used dataset two as the participants that completed the survey (n=656) had answered all questions in part four of the survey related to the causes of griefing.

These participants were asked to answer these questions from the perception of the griefed, and the perception of the griefer. Many respondents therefore had to answer both sets of questions, even if they indicated that they only very rarely caused grief or were subjected to griefing in addition to the other.

4.2.2.4.1 Griefed Perception

All participants of dataset two that indicated they were subjected to griefing were asked:

When griefed, how do you think you have been chosen as their target?

- a. The griefer is unknown to me, I am an anonymous victim.
- b. The griefer knows me, and dislikes me.
- c. I am a new player, perceived as an easy target.
- d. I am an experienced player, a challenging target.
- e. I am targeted by a group of griefers as I appear weak by myself.
- f. A griefer targets me as I am perceived as a threat to them.

These options avoided discussing a player's personal demographics or the characteristics of their actual avatar(s) they portray in game as these were asked in future survey questions. Instead the options ask a griefed participant to think about other factors that may contribute towards the griefer picking them as their target. Table 13 outlines the griefed players' answers.

Table 13: Percentage of grieved (on various scales) who agreed with why they were targeted by griefers

Option	I have been subjected to griefing					Total n=642
	Very rarely n=180	On occasion n=362	About half of the time n=57	Most of the time n=30	All of the time n=13	
a	77.8%	86.2%	86.0%	83.3%	84.6%	83.6%
b	24.4%	28.2%	29.8%	50.0%	46.2%	28.7%
c	30.0%	37.3%	54.4%	50.0%	15.4%	36.9%
d	15.6%	18.8%	28.1%	23.3%	38.5%	19.3%
e	27.2%	41.2%	57.9%	63.3%	46.2%	39.9%
f	20.0%	27.1%	36.8%	23.3%	30.8%	25.9%

Note: The values a to f refer to the options available in the question above. There were 14 respondents that indicated they were never grieved and so did not answer this question.

It is quite clear that the grieved players were in agreement with the first option (option a in Table 13), with 83.6% of players on average indicating they had been chosen as a target by the griever simply as an anonymous victim, and they did not know the perpetrator. Regardless of how often the grieved player had been subjected to griefing, the answer remained consistent, with the lowest percentage coming from the players that had very rarely been grieved, at 77.8% in agreement with being an anonymous victim of griefing.

The rest of the options regarding why the griever targets them (the grieved players) were weighted more towards disagreement. In particular, only 19.3% of all grieved respondents agreed that they were targeted by griefers due to their experience and the challenge they provided, however the amount of grieved that agreed with this increased as the grieved indicated that they were subjected to griefing more often. Five of the thirteen respondents (38.5%) that indicated that they were grieved all of the time, agreed with the statement above, which is much higher than those players that indicated they were grieved very rarely (15.6% agreed), and on occasion (18.8% agreed).

74.1% of the grieved disagreed with option f (“A griever targets me as I am perceived as a threat to them”) and 71.3% with option b (“The griever knows me, and dislikes me”). The percentage of disagreement to option f did not change much between grieved players of different regularity, but option b showed a similar pattern to option d. As the player indicated they were grieved more often, they were also more likely to agree with the statement that the griever knew and disliked them, instigating the griefing. While this does not correlate to the percentages for the statement of anonymity, it does not need to, as these two can be mutually exclusive. A grieved player may be harassed on one

occasion by an unknown anonymous griefer, and on another occasion by a known disliked player.

Other than anonymity, the reasons a griefer targets a player that were agreed with the most were option c and e. These options state “I am a new player, perceived as an easy target”, and “I am targeted by a group of griefers as I appear weak by myself”. From the grieved point-of-view it appears they feel as if, if not targeted due to anonymity it is because the griefer is picking on an easy target.

The variances between the grieved players of different regularity shows that those that are grieved more often perceive additional reasons for the grieving other than the highly agreed upon anonymity. The more often they are grieved the more they indicated they could be targeted in additional ways by the griefer. In particular, it was identified that the more heavily a player was grieved, the more likely they were to perceive it as a personal attack by a griefer that knows and dislikes them.

4.2.2.4.2 Griefer Perspective

All participants of dataset two that indicated they performed griefing were asked:

When griefing, how do you choose your target?

- a. The target is unknown to me, an anonymous victim.
- b. The target is known to me, and I dislike them.
- c. The target is a new player, an easy target.
- d. The target is an experienced player, a challenging target.
- e. The target is chosen by another, as I am in a group of griefers.
- f. The target is a competitor that I feel threatened by.
- g. The target is an unskilled player, an easy target.
- h. The target has been deliberately griefing other players.
- i. The target has been deliberately griefing me, and I retaliate.

As shown, griefers were given more options to consider than the grieved. This is because the grieved could not know exactly why they have been targeted and were asked to provide their best suggestion. On the other hand, the griefer knows exactly why they target their victims and their options could include additional answers.

Table 14: Percentage of griefers (on various scales) agreed with why they target a player

Option	I have performed griefing					Total n=431
	Very rarely n=263	On occasion n=115	About half of the time n=27	Most of the time n=12	All of the time n=14	
a	33.8%	44.3%	66.7%	66.7%	78.6%	41.1%
b	38.4%	60.9%	66.7%	75.0%	64.3%	48.0%
c	8.0%	20.9%	25.9%	50.0%	50.0%	15.1%
d	12.2%	36.5%	44.4%	66.7%	50.0%	23.4%
e	9.1%	24.3%	40.7%	16.7%	28.6%	16.0%
f	12.9%	30.4%	25.9%	16.7%	35.7%	19.3%
g	12.5%	30.4%	51.9%	66.7%	64.3%	23.0%
h	69.6%	73.9%	70.4%	58.3%	64.3%	70.3%
i	79.1%	75.7%	74.1%	91.7%	71.4%	78.0%

Note: The values a to i refer to the options available in the question above. There were 225 respondents that indicated they never caused grief and so did not answer this question

The options that the griefers agreed with the most on average were options h and i (Table 14). These options state that the griefer targets a player as that player had been deliberately griefing others (option h), and had deliberately griefed the respondent, and they retaliated (option i). These two options were fairly consistent among the griefers of varying amounts. However quite a few of the options followed the pattern that the more

often a player performed griefing, the more likely they agreed with that option. For example, only 33.8% (n=263) of the grievers that very rarely performed griefing agreed that they target a player anonymously, whereas 78.6% (n=14) of the grievers that commit to griefing all the time agreed that they target a player anonymously. Similarly only 8% of the “very rarely” grievers agreed that they target new and easy players, compared to 50% of the players that grief most or all of the time. The same trend can be seen with option g (the griefer targets unskilled easy opponents), but the rest of the options were a little mixed depending on the grievers regularity to perform griefing.

When considering only the grievers that indicated they performed griefing very rarely or on occasion, it appears that the majority disagreed with most options for why they target a player, excluding the two retaliatory options, and to a lesser extent the option regarding targeting a player they know but dislike. This indicates that players that only ‘dabble’ in griefing usually do so for retaliation. They are mostly causing another player grief because that player grieved them or others first. Is this a personal vendetta or are they trying to protect others as a vigilante? The interviews that were conducted were analysed in the next chapter and discussed retaliatory griefing.

There was one anomaly that appears in Table 14 for statement e and those that perform griefing half of the time. Exactly 40.7% of these grievers agreed that the target is chosen by another player, and attacked by a group of grievers, compared to much lower rates by other levels of griefing. Perhaps these part-time grievers enjoy griefing the most as a social activity.

4.2.2.4.3 Comparison of Associations

To compare the data from the perspective of only the heavy grievers, grieved and intersector only (from Figure 8), rather than all participants, the options available were converted to general statements that could apply to any participant, and then the data was merged. These became the options in the data:

The griefer selects the target as _____

- a. An anonymous victim.
- b. They know and dislike them.
- c. They are a new player, an easy target.
- d. They are an experienced player, a challenging target.
- e. They are alone, and the griefer is part of a group of grievers.
- f. They are a threat to the griefer.
- g. They are an unskilled player, an easy target.
- h. They are griefing other players.
- i. They were griefing that player first.

Table 15: Percentages that the different associations to griefing agreed with why a griefer targets a player

Option	Association			
	Grieved n=88	Griefer n=41	Intersector	
			(Grieved Perspective) n=12	(Griefer Perspective) n=12
a	87.5%	70.7%	66.7%	66.7%
b	35.2%	68.3%	58.3%	66.7%
c	48.9%	41.5%	41.7%	25.0%
d	25.0%	48.8%	50.0%	58.3%
e	58.0%	31.7%	58.3%	33.3%
f	30.7%	24.4%	41.7%	33.3%
g		63.4%	41.7%	41.7%
h		61.0%	83.3%	83.3%
i		73.2%	91.7%	91.7%

Note: The values a to i refer to the options available above. There are no values for the grieved in g, h and i as they were not options for these respondents.

Table 15 shows the perceptions of how a griefer chooses their target from the perspective of the regularly grieved, the grievers and the intersectors. Recall (from Figure 8) that only those that were associated to these types of at least half of their logged in time were considered to be a regular player of that type, so all players that

never, very rarely or on occasion were subjected to or performed griefing were excluded from this.

Firstly, the top reason why a griefer selects their target is because they are anonymous. This coincides with previous literature such as, anonymity breeds meanness (Coates, 2004), the “Disinhibition Effect” (Suler, 2004), and popular culture such as the “greater internet fuckwad theory” (Penny Arcade, 2004). The majority (87.5%) of those that are regularly grieved perceived to have been targeted due to being anonymous, while 70.7% of griefers agreed that they have targeted a player due to the anonymity.

However, it would appear from the griefers point-of-view that griefing is not as anonymous as the grieved perceive. Only just below anonymity as the reason, 68.3% of griefers indicated that they have targeted a player for griefing because they actually know their target and dislike them. Also the lowest rated reason by the grieved (at 25%) was that they were targeted because of their high experience and challenge. This is in direct opposition to almost double (48.8%) of the griefers indicating the same. While griefers still indicated they targeted easy opponents (in options c and g), not all shy away from challenging targets, as the grieved perceived.

Looking at the additional options for griefers in this survey question, 73.2% of griefers agreed that they have targeted a player because that player had grieved them first, and 61.0% agreed that they have targeted a player because they had been griefing other players in general. As before these options may relate to retaliation and vigilantism. More interestingly however is that the intersector (the players that indicated they performed griefing and had been subjected to griefing regularly) agreed with these two options much more. Most intersector (91.7%) retaliated against their griefer, and 83.3% retaliated against other player’s griefers. This is suggestive that intersector, whom have been grieved often, are more likely to select griefers as their targets, than the griefers that are not often grieved. Note that it does not suggest that intersector only choose griefers as their targets, but that they are more likely to choose griefers. It must also be noted that the intersector only numbered 12, and therefore these results may not be representative. However a few intersector were involved in the interviews and were asked questions relating to these trends, which these responses can be seen in the next chapter.

4.2.2.5 Player Demographics Contributing to the Targeting of the Griefed

The survey asked the participants how often the personal demographics of the player in real-life factored into the choice of why a player would be chosen as a griefing target. The player demographics that were questioned were gender, age, educational level, country of residence, ethnicity and sexual orientation. For each demographic the respondent had the options of never, very rarely, on occasion, about half of the time, most of the time, and all of time. Obviously to be a factor, the griefer would have to know facts about their target's real identity. Table 17 begins outlining the results.

Before the analysis of these results, earlier in the survey all participants were asked how often they openly reveal their personal demographics to other online players. The same options of regularity were available: never, very rarely, on occasion, about half of the time, most of the time, and all of time. This analysis reveals which demographics prefer to remain anonymous more so than others (Table 16). Those that remain anonymous cannot be affected by the previous question of personal demographics being related to griefing as they have not openly revealed themselves.

Table 16: Percentage that respondents revealed each demographic openly in MMORPGs

		Amount respondent reveals					
		Never	Very rarely	On occasion	About half of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
Gender		Do you reveal your Gender openly in MMORPGs?					
Female	n=112	5.4%	19.6%	25.9%	9.8%	19.6%	19.6%
Male	n=544	5.1%	8.1%	17.8%	4.0%	25.6%	39.3%
Both	n=656	5.2%	10.1%	19.2%	5.0%	24.5%	36.0%
Age		Do you reveal your Age openly in MMORPGs?					
16 to 17	n=51	9.8%	19.6%	23.5%	17.6%	11.8%	17.6%
18 to 21	n=141	3.5%	22.0%	22.0%	9.2%	18.4%	24.8%
22 to 30	n=290	5.2%	17.6%	24.1%	8.3%	21.7%	23.1%
31 and over	n=174	9.8%	22.4%	25.3%	6.9%	21.8%	13.8%
All	n=656	6.4%	20.0%	23.9%	8.8%	20.3%	20.6%
Education		Do you reveal your Education openly in MMORPGs?					
Other	n=28	7.1%	42.9%	21.4%	3.6%	14.3%	10.7%
Primary	n=19	26.3%	10.5%	31.6%	5.3%	5.3%	21.1%
Secondary	n=199	28.1%	26.6%	19.6%	3.0%	12.1%	10.6%
Vocational	n=83	13.3%	31.3%	18.1%	3.6%	22.9%	10.8%
Undergrad	n=227	16.7%	25.6%	23.3%	6.6%	14.1%	13.7%
Postgrad	n=100	23.0%	26.0%	21.0%	7.0%	6.0%	17.0%
All	n=656	20.6%	27.0%	21.3%	5.0%	13.1%	13.0%
Ethnicity		Do you reveal your Ethnicity openly in MMORPGs?					
Caucasian	n=500	27.0%	21.8%	17.2%	4.6%	11.2%	18.2%
Other	n=119	19.3%	30.3%	16.0%	8.4%	13.4%	12.6%
Both	n=619	25.5%	23.4%	17.0%	5.3%	11.6%	17.1%
Sexual Orientation		Do you reveal your Sexual Orientation openly in MMORPGs?					
Bisexual	n=40	25.0%	32.5%	17.5%	5.0%	12.5%	7.5%
Gay/Lesbian	n=22	9.1%	40.9%	22.7%	9.1%	4.5%	13.6%
Heterosexual	n=478	25.7%	20.1%	20.9%	5.2%	10.0%	18.0%
Transsexual	n=8	37.5%	50.0%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	n=9	33.3%	11.1%	33.3%	0.0%	11.1%	11.1%
All	n=557	25.3%	22.1%	20.8%	5.2%	9.9%	16.7%

Note: Ethnicity only had 619 responses, as 37 respondents did not provide their ethnicity. Sexual preference had 557 responses as 99 respondents did not provide their sexual orientation.

Looking specifically at gender in Table 16, it can be identified clearly that males are more likely to reveal their gender to others than females are. While roughly the same percentage of females to males indicated that they never reveal their gender, 39.3% of males revealed themselves as male all of the time, compared to only 19.6% of females. This expected result relates to how females are more likely to be subjected to vulgar behaviour if their gender in real-life is discovered by other players (Gray, 2014).

Regarding different age brackets, the 18 to 21 year olds were most likely to reveal their age to others more often (24.8%), and least likely to completely withhold their age from other players (3.5%). Both the 16 to 17 year olds, and 31 and over age brackets were most likely to never reveal their age to others (both at 9.8%),

Moving on to the educational level of the respondents, it appears that the respondents that had completed primary school as their highest level of education were the most likely to reveal their education all of the time to other players (21.1%), but the number of respondents in this category were much less than all others. Those of secondary school (or high school) education were the least likely to reveal this demographic of themselves, with 28.1% indicating they would never reveal it, and 26.6% indicating that they would only very rarely reveal that secondary school was their highest level of education. The other educational levels were mixed, and apart from primary school graduates, the university postgraduates were the next highest at possibly revealing that that fact of their education to others with 17.0% of this type revealing it all of the time. However there was also 49.0% of postgraduates that chose to never reveal their education or only very rarely.

In regards to the Ethnicity of the respondents, the two groups that were identified did not display much of a difference. Approximately 50% of both types chose to never or very rarely reveal their ethnicity to other players. Caucasians were only slightly more likely to reveal their ethnicity to other players all of the time.

The revealing of a respondent's sexual preference or orientation to other players was quite different among the different types in the survey. There was the problem that some types were represented by very few numbers. There were only eight transsexual/transgender respondents, none of whom revealed that fact any more than occasionally. This is in comparison to the majority type of heterosexual of which 18.0% (n=478) always revealed they were heterosexual to others. Interestingly gay/lesbian respondents were the least likely to never reveal their sexual orientation (9.1%) with many having at least revealed it in rare moments, and 13.6% always revealing this about themselves to others.

In theory it would appear that those types that choose to reveal their demographics more often are the majority group and have less fear of discrimination. Those types that did not reveal their demographics in the first place cannot be targeted by grievers for these particular personal attributes. Perhaps they choose not to reveal themselves in fear of discrimination. Why reveal what can safely remain hidden?

Moving back to the question regarding how often personal demographics factored in to the choice of why a player is chosen as a griefing target, all participants of dataset two regardless of their association to griefing were asked a variation of the same question,

- **Griefed:** “Regarding your personal demographics, how often do you think the following are related to the decision of how the griefer picks you as their target?”
- **Griever:** “Regarding the demographics of players, how often do the following have any relation into your decision to target a player when performing acts of griefing?”

The player demographics questioned were once again gender, age, educational level, country of residence, ethnicity and sexual orientation. For each demographic the respondent had the options of never, very rarely, on occasion, about half of the time, most of the time, and all of time. So there were six player demographics and each had six levels of frequency

4.2.2.5.1 Griefed Perception

Table 17 shows the results from the perception of the griefed players. This table is a cross tabulation of the griefed of varying degrees, against how often they agreed that their demographic affected the griefer's decision to target them.

Table 17: Percentage of grieved (on various scales) that agreed each demographic related to grievers targeting them

Demographic		I have been subjected to grieving					Total n=642
		Very rarely n=180	On occasion n=362	About half the time n=57	Most of the time n=30	All of the time n=13	
Gender	Never	66.1%	63.8%	61.4%	63.3%	69.2%	64.3%
	Very rarely	17.2%	15.7%	14.0%	13.3%	15.4%	15.9%
	On occasion	7.2%	11.0%	15.8%	13.3%	7.7%	10.4%
	About half the time	3.9%	6.4%	5.3%			5.1%
	Most of the time	3.9%	1.9%	3.5%	10.0%		3.0%
	All of the time	1.7%	1.1%			7.7%	1.2%
Age	Never	70.0%	65.7%	59.6%	60.0%	30.8%	65.4%
	Very rarely	13.3%	17.4%	21.1%	16.7%	23.1%	16.7%
	On occasion	4.4%	7.2%	5.3%	10.0%	23.1%	6.7%
	About half the time	6.7%	3.3%	5.3%	13.3%	7.7%	5.0%
	Most of the time	3.9%	4.4%	5.3%		7.7%	4.2%
	All of the time	1.7%	1.9%	3.5%		7.7%	2.0%
Edu Level	Never	80.6%	77.9%	71.9%	76.7%	61.5%	77.7%
	Very rarely	13.9%	14.9%	17.5%	16.7%	7.7%	14.8%
	On occasion	3.9%	3.9%	7.0%	6.7%	23.1%	4.7%
	About half the time	0.6%	0.8%			7.7%	0.8%
	Most of the time	1.1%	1.1%	3.5%			1.2%
	All of the time		1.4%				0.8%
Country	Never	66.7%	61.0%	57.9%	50.0%	46.2%	61.5%
	Very rarely	17.8%	19.3%	22.8%	30.0%	7.7%	19.5%
	On occasion	7.8%	11.0%	10.5%	16.7%	7.7%	10.3%
	About half the time	5.6%	5.5%	7.0%	3.3%	23.1%	5.9%
	Most of the time	1.7%	1.9%	1.8%		7.7%	1.9%
	All of the time	0.6%	1.1%			7.7%	0.9%
Ethnicity	Never	70.0%	70.4%	66.7%	63.3%	53.8%	69.3%
	Very rarely	15.0%	13.5%	15.8%	23.3%	23.1%	14.8%
	On occasion	8.3%	8.3%	8.8%	10.0%		8.3%
	About half the time	5.0%	4.7%	3.5%	3.3%	7.7%	4.7%
	Most of the time	0.6%	2.8%	3.5%			2.0%
	All of the time	1.1%	0.3%	1.8%		15.4%	0.9%
Sexual Pref.	Never	73.9%	71.0%	66.7%	70.0%	76.9%	71.5%
	Very rarely	8.9%	11.9%	12.3%	13.3%	7.7%	11.1%
	On occasion	6.7%	8.0%	5.3%	13.3%		7.5%
	About half the time	5.0%	3.3%	8.8%		7.7%	4.2%
	Most of the time	2.2%	4.4%	5.3%	3.3%		3.7%
	All of the time	3.3%	1.4%	1.8%		7.7%	2.0%

Looking at the totals column of Table 17, there is no type of demographic that clearly stands out among the others as a demographic related to why a grieved player believes they have been targeted. On an individual case by case basis, starting with gender, there was not much difference between the grieved that were very rarely grieved compared to the regularly grieved. There was a slight indication that the more often a player was grieved, the more often their gender was related to this, but the number is still so small that it could be a coincidence.

In regards to a grieved player's age, educational level, country of residence and ethnicity there was a much more convincing trend - the more often a player was subjected to grieving, the more often they felt their demographic was related to why the griefer targeted them. For example 70% (n=180) of the players that indicated via the survey that they were very rarely grieved, also indicated that their age was never a factor in the grieving. This is compared to only 30.8% (n=13) and 60.0% (n=30) of players that were grieved all of the time, or most of the time, indicated that age was never a factor. As mentioned, the same trend was found with educational level, country of residence and ethnicity.

Table 18 shows another cross tabulation of data from the perception of all of the grieved players. This time the demographics are split into their different types (for example male and female), and compared against how often they believed that demographic is related to why a griefer targets them.

Table 18: Percentage of grieved (the total grieved) that agreed each of their demographics related to grievers targeting them

			How often your demographic related to why you are targeted					
Demographic			Never	Very rarely	On occasion	About half of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
Gen.	Female	n=107	37.4%	21.5%	23.4%	6.5%	8.4%	2.8%
	Male	n=535	69.7%	14.8%	7.9%	4.9%	1.9%	0.9%
Age	16 to 17	n=48	33.3%	22.9%	10.4%	16.7%	12.5%	4.2%
	18 to 21	n=138	58.0%	18.1%	8.0%	5.8%	7.2%	2.9%
	22 to 30	n=286	70.6%	12.2%	7.0%	5.2%	2.8%	2.1%
	31 and over	n=170	71.8%	21.2%	4.1%	0.6%	1.8%	0.6%
Education	Primary	n=19	73.7%	15.8%	5.3%		5.3%	
	Secondary	n=195	71.8%	15.9%	7.7%	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%
	Vocational	n=80	68.8%	18.8%	8.8%	1.3%	1.3%	1.3%
	Undergraduate	n=221	83.3%	14.0%	1.4%	0.5%	0.9%	
	Postgraduate	n=99	82.8%	12.1%	3.0%		1.0%	1.0%
Country	U.S.	n=285	62.8%	19.6%	9.5%	5.3%	2.1%	0.7%
	U.K.	n=61	52.5%	23.0%	14.8%	4.9%	3.3%	1.6%
	Australia	n=42	52.4%	21.4%	9.5%	9.5%	4.8%	2.4%
	Canada	n=41	68.3%	19.5%	7.3%	4.9%		
	Germany	n=23	60.9%	26.1%	4.3%	4.3%	4.3%	
	Netherlands	n=23	73.9%	17.4%	4.3%	4.3%		
	Sweden	n=19	78.9%	21.1%				
	Denmark	n=15	60.0%	33.3%		6.7%		
	Finland	n=13	61.5%	23.1%	7.7%	7.7%		
	France	n=10	40.0%	20.0%	40.0%			
Eth.	White	n=490	69.2%	15.5%	7.6%	4.7%	2.0%	1.0%
	Other	n=116	64.7%	13.8%	12.1%	6.0%	2.6%	0.9%
Sexual Pref.	Unknown	n=94	68.1%	8.5%	8.5%	3.2%	7.4%	4.3%
	Bisexual	n=40	60.0%	20.0%	10.0%	7.5%	2.5%	
	Gay/Lesbian	n=22	45.5%	18.2%	27.3%	9.1%		
	Heterosexual	n=469	74.8%	10.4%	6.0%	4.1%	3.2%	1.5%
	Transsexual	n=8	50.0%	12.5%	12.5%		12.5%	12.5%
	Other	n=9	66.7%	11.1%	11.1%			11.1%

An overview of Table 18 reveals that the groups most likely to perceive that they are being targeted for griefing due to a particular demographic are females, 16 to 17 year olds, Australians, gays, lesbians and transsexuals. Educational level appears to have no clear indication of which type feels targeted more often because of their demographic, but certainly university educated players indicated that this demographic was less likely to give reason for a griefer to target them.

From this overview it is clear that the group most likely to think their demographic is a factor for the griefer to target them is the 16 to 17 year old age group, although transsexuals also indicated they feel targeted (albeit their sample size is very small at n=8). In Table 18, the age groups show a clear indication that as age increases, the percentage of respondents that think their age contributes towards a griefer targeting them declines. This is the same with female versus male. Looking at the respondents' country of residence, it would appear (as stated above) that Australians feel they are targeted due to their nationality more often than other countries, followed by those from the United Kingdom. Could this be related to Australia usually being connected to servers from the United States of America and having poor latency? With complications of network efficiency, Australians can become vulnerable and require faster reactions to respond to griefers than the average player. Lastly focusing on ethnicity, there is very little variation between white ethnic respondents and the rest. If the study had enough respondents of the different ethnicities as shown in Appendix C, perhaps there may have been some greater variation.

4.2.2.5.2 Griefer Perception

Table 19 shows the results from the perception of the griefers. This table is a cross tabulation of the griefers of varying degrees, against how often they agreed that the targets demographic affected their decision to target them.

Table 19: Percentage of grievers (on various scales) that agreed each demographic being related to why they target a player

Demographic		I have performed grieving					Total n=431
		Very rarely n=263	On occasion n=115	About half the time n=27	Most of the time n=12	All of the time n=14	
Gender	Never	93.9%	89.6%	81.5%	75.0%	71.4%	90.7%
	Very rarely	4.9%	4.3%	7.4%	16.7%	7.1%	5.3%
	On occasion	1.1%	1.7%	7.4%		14.3%	2.1%
	About half of the time		1.7%		8.3%		0.7%
	Most of the time		2.6%	3.7%			0.9%
	All of the time					7.1%	0.2%
Age	Never	81.4%	75.7%	59.3%	66.7%	71.4%	77.7%
	Very rarely	7.2%	9.6%	11.1%	8.3%	14.3%	8.4%
	On occasion	6.5%	7.8%	11.1%		7.1%	7.0%
	About half of the time	3.0%	2.6%	7.4%	8.3%		3.2%
	Most of the time	1.5%	3.5%	7.4%	16.7%		2.8%
	All of the time	0.4%	0.9%	3.7%		7.1%	0.9%
Edu Level	Never	88.2%	83.5%	74.1%	83.3%	92.9%	86.1%
	Very rarely	6.1%	7.8%	7.4%	8.3%	7.1%	6.7%
	On occasion	4.6%	4.3%	14.8%	8.3%		5.1%
	About half of the time	1.1%	2.6%				1.4%
	Most of the time		0.9%	3.7%			0.5%
	All of the time		0.9%				0.2%
Country	Never	88.2%	80.0%	66.7%	91.7%	85.7%	84.7%
	Very rarely	7.2%	8.7%	14.8%	8.3%		7.9%
	On occasion	3.0%	9.6%	7.4%			4.9%
	About half of the time	0.8%	1.7%	3.7%		7.1%	1.4%
	Most of the time	0.4%		7.4%			0.7%
	All of the time	0.4%				7.1%	0.5%
Ethnicity	Never	92.8%	91.3%	74.1%	83.3%	85.7%	90.7%
	Very rarely	4.6%	6.1%	11.1%			5.1%
	On occasion	1.9%			16.7%		1.6%
	About half of the time		2.6%	3.7%			0.9%
	Most of the time	0.8%		11.1%		7.1%	1.4%
	All of the time					7.1%	0.2%
Sexual Pref.	Never	94.7%	90.4%	81.5%	91.7%	78.6%	92.1%
	Very rarely	2.3%	5.2%	18.5%	8.3%		4.2%
	On occasion	2.3%	1.7%				1.9%
	About half of the time		2.6%				0.7%
	Most of the time	0.4%					0.2%
	All of the time	0.4%				21.4%	0.9%

It is immediately apparent that the more often a player performed griefing, the more often their potential targets' gender factored into their decision to pick their target. The other demographics in Table 19 did not follow this structure. However there was one clear result that must be mentioned; a griefer that caused grief all the time was either uninterested in a potential targets' sexual preference (78.6% indicating never) or in complete contrast, 21.4% targeted a player due to their sexual preference all of the time. It was not asked of respondents which sexual preference they target, but perhaps it relates to the gay/lesbian and transsexual players that feel they are targeted for griefing a lot of the time (Table 18).

There was one anomaly discovered, if you view only the griefer that performs griefing half of the time, they were much more likely to target a player due to their demographics than griefers of other regularities. Could this be related to other individuals in their griefing group (recall these part-time griefers preferred griefing in a group, Table 14) picking targets for them? Also, reviewing just the griefer that very rarely performs griefing indicates that it was almost never due to players' demographics, with only their targets' age showing a slighter higher indication.

Comparing which demographics a griefer may use as a reason to target a player (Table 19), versus which demographics of the grieved they believe is related to the griefing performed upon them (Table 17), it is clear that the grieved view their demographics as the cause of the griefing much more than the griefers. This is true of all six types of demographics. For example 90.7% (n=431) of all griefers indicated that the gender of the player they target was never a reason for them in choosing that target but over 64.3% (n=642) of grieved perceived their gender was related to the griefing. This was the largest discrepancy between the two groups.

Country of residence, ethnicity and the sexual preference of the players were the other three demographics that showed a large difference between the griefers' reason to target a player, and the grieved players' perceived reason that they were targeted, with approximately 20% difference between the two groups. The other two demographics, age and educational level indicated approximately 10% difference.

The differences here between perceived (what the grieved players see) and actual (what the griefers actually do – assuming they are telling the truth), is enough to indicate that the grieved feel discriminated and attacked because of their demographics to a greater extent than is reflected in the self-reported behaviour of griefers. Perhaps the grieved are targeted more often due to non-demographic related causes, or perhaps the griefers that do target particular demographics are griefing more people.

Following on from the grievers' overall perceptions, they were next split by their gender and age, as these two demographics of the grievers had good sample sizes for each type opposed to the heavily weighted demographics such as country (primarily United States), sexual orientation (primarily heterosexual) and ethnicity (primarily white).

4.2.2.5.3 Male and Female Griever Perception

As stated in the last paragraph of the previous section, first the grievers were split by gender, to identify the difference between a male and female griever in relation to choosing a target based on the target's demographics. The results are outlined in Table 20.

Table 20: Percentage of grievers (split by gender) that agreed each of the demographics related to the reason they target a player

Griever Gender	How often a player demographic related to why you target them					
	Never	Very rarely	On occasion	About half of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
Target a player because of their Gender						
Female	n=52	88.5%	5.8%	5.8%		
Male	n=379	91.0%	5.3%	1.6%	0.8%	1.1%
Target a player because of their Age						
Female	n=52	75.0%	5.8%	13.5%	5.8%	
Male	n=379	78.1%	8.7%	6.1%	2.9%	3.2%
Target a player because of their Educational Level						
Female	n=52	90.4%	1.9%	5.8%	1.9%	
Male	n=379	85.5%	7.4%	5.0%	1.3%	0.5%
Target a player because of their Country of Residence						
Female	n=52	92.3%	5.8%	1.9%		
Male	n=379	83.6%	8.2%	5.3%	1.6%	0.8%
Target a player because of their Ethnicity						
Female	n=52	94.2%	1.9%	1.9%	1.9%	
Male	n=379	90.2%	5.5%	1.6%	0.8%	1.6%
Target a player because of their Sexual Preference						
Female	n=52	96.2%	3.8%			
Male	n=379	91.6%	4.2%	2.1%	0.8%	0.3%

Analysing the results suggests that female grievers are slightly more likely to target someone because of their gender with 2.5% less females than males indicating they never choose their target because of the player's gender. The same is true for targeting a player's age. The main difference here though, is that there is a small percentage of males that target a player because of their gender and/or age all of the time or almost always, whereas the females only target those demographics on occasions.

The four remaining demographics were more likely to be the reason for being targeted, and also more frequently targeted, by male grievers. While still quite low, the sexual preference of a player stood out amongst male grievers (compared to female grievers) as a reason for targeting a player. 96.2% (n=52) of females indicated that they would never target a player due to their sexual orientation, with the remaining 3.8% indicating it was very rare. This is opposed to 91.6% (n=379) of male grievers indicating never, with a small spread of the remaining across other regularities, up to 1.1% (n=379) indicating it was the reason they target someone all of the time.

4.2.2.5.4 Different Aged Griever Perception

Table 21 outlines the results of the grievers split by set age groups, to identify the groups' differences in choosing a target based on the targets' demographics.

Table 21: Percentage of griefers (split by age) that agreed each of the demographics related to the reason they target a player

Griever Age	How often a player demographic related to why you target them					
	Never	Very rarely	On occasion	About half of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
Target a player because of their Gender						
16 to 17	n=43	90.7%	2.3%	2.3%	2.3%	2.3%
18 to 21	n=102	84.3%	7.8%	4.9%	1.0%	2.0%
22 to 30	n=211	94.3%	3.8%	0.9%	0.5%	0.5%
31 and over	n=75	89.3%	8.0%	1.3%		1.3%
Target a player because of their Age						
16 to 17	n=43	65.1%	14.0%	7.0%	2.3%	4.7%
18 to 21	n=102	68.6%	7.8%	11.8%	6.9%	4.9%
22 to 30	n=211	82.5%	7.6%	5.2%	2.4%	0.9%
31 and over	n=75	84.0%	8.0%	5.3%	1.3%	1.3%
Target a player because of their Educational Level						
16 to 17	n=43	79.1%	9.3%	7.0%	2.3%	2.3%
18 to 21	n=102	80.4%	10.8%	3.9%	2.9%	1.0%
22 to 30	n=211	90.5%	4.3%	4.3%	0.9%	
31 and over	n=75	85.3%	6.7%	8.0%		
Target a player because of their Country of Residence						
16 to 17	n=43	79.1%	11.6%	7.0%		2.3%
18 to 21	n=102	81.4%	7.8%	4.9%	3.9%	2.0%
22 to 30	n=211	87.2%	6.2%	5.2%	0.5%	0.9%
31 and over	n=75	85.3%	10.7%	2.7%	1.3%	
Target a player because of their Ethnicity						
16 to 17	n=43	83.7%	4.7%		4.7%	7.0%
18 to 21	n=102	91.2%	4.9%	1.0%	1.0%	2.0%
22 to 30	n=211	91.9%	4.3%	2.8%	0.5%	0.5%
31 and over	n=75	90.7%	8.0%			1.3%
Target a player because of their Sexual Preference						
16 to 17	n=43	88.4%	4.7%	2.3%		4.7%
18 to 21	n=102	91.2%	5.9%	1.0%	2.0%	
22 to 30	n=211	92.9%	3.8%	1.9%	0.5%	0.5%
31 and over	n=75	93.3%	2.7%	2.7%		1.3%

The breakdown of age groups indicates strongly that the griefers of the youngest audience surveyed, aged 16 to 17 (n=43), are more likely to choose their target based on their demographics than the other age groups. The exception to this was gender; that is the 16 to 17 year old griefers were similar in response to other age groups regarding choosing their target based on the target's gender.

When it came to choosing a target based on their age, the second youngest group, aged 18 to 21 (n=102) were almost as likely as the 16 to 17 year olds to target this way. Age was the demographic that had the largest differences between age groups. The older age groups of 22 to 30 (n=211) and 31 and over (n=75) indicated they never chose their targets due to their age 82.5% and 84.0% of the time respectively. This is in contrast to the younger age groups of 16 to 17 and 18 to 21 that indicated they never chose a target due to their age 65.1% and 68.6% respectively. In fact 4.7% of the 16 to 17 year old grievers indicated they targeted a player due to their age all of the time.

4.2.2.5.5 Comparison of Associations

The data was further compared from the perspective of the heavy grievers, grieved and intersector only (from Figure 8), rather than all participants. This table (Table 22) confirms the theory from section 4.2.2.5.2 that the grieved view their demographics as more likely to be the cause of the grieving much more than the grievers indicated. Although this phenomenon does not necessarily indicate that what the grieved perceive is wrong (or partially wrong), it may just be that a smaller amount of grievers are targeting many players based on particular demographics.

There was one visible anomaly regarding the players sexual preference, in that the griefer either wasn't really interested and that it wasn't a factor of their grieving, or in contrast, they chose to target a player all of the time because of their sexual preference. This is also reflected in Table 19 (and discussed in 4.2.2.5.2) among the grievers that caused grief all of the time.

Table 22: Percentage that the different associations to grieving that agreed with each demographic being related to how a target is chosen

Option	Association				
	Grieved n=88	Griever n=41	Intersector		
			(Grieved Perspective) n=12	(Griever Perspective) n=12	
Gender	Never	63.6%	80.5%	58.3%	66.7%
	Very rarely	15.9%	4.9%		25.0%
	On occasion	12.5%	7.3%	25.0%	8.3%
	About half of the time	3.4%	2.4%		
	Most of the time	4.5%	2.4%	8.3%	
	All of the time		2.4%	8.3%	
Age	Never	53.4%	61.0%	75.0%	75.0%
	Very rarely	22.7%	9.8%		16.7%
	On occasion	8.0%	7.3%	16.7%	8.3%
	About half of the time	9.1%	7.3%		
	Most of the time	3.4%	9.8%	8.3%	
	All of the time	3.4%	4.9%		
Edu Level	Never	71.6%	80.5%	75.0%	83.3%
	Very rarely	17.0%	7.3%	8.3%	8.3%
	On occasion	9.1%	9.8%	8.3%	8.3%
	About half of the time	1.1%			
	Most of the time	1.1%	2.4%	8.3%	
	All of the time				
Country	Never	51.1%	73.2%	75.0%	91.7%
	Very rarely	26.1%	9.8%		8.3%
	On occasion	11.4%	4.9%	16.7%	
	About half of the time	8.0%	4.9%	8.3%	
	Most of the time	2.3%	4.9%		
	All of the time	1.1%	2.4%		
Ethnicity	Never	62.5%	78.0%	75.0%	83.3%
	Very rarely	19.3%	4.9%	16.7%	8.3%
	On occasion	9.1%	2.4%		8.3%
	About half of the time	4.5%	2.4%		
	Most of the time	1.1%	9.8%	8.3%	
	All of the time	3.4%	2.4%		
Sexual Pref.	Never	67.0%	82.9%	83.3%	83.3%
	Very rarely	13.6%	9.8%		16.7%
	On occasion	8.0%			
	About half of the time	5.7%		8.3%	
	Most of the time	3.4%		8.3%	
	All of the time	2.3%	7.3%		

Although the number of intersector were low (n=12) some assumptions can be made with this group. The intersector is a player that has strong insight in to both sides of griefing, so it was interesting to see the reverse trend to the heavily grieved and heavy griefer. From the intersector's perspective as a griefer they are more likely to indicate that the cause of the griefing was due to certain demographics than their perspective as a grieved player. With their insight, perhaps they recognise more easily than the pure grieved when the griefing upon them is due to their demographic. They also indicated through their perspective as a grieved player that gender was the most likely demographic to be related to a griefing incident with a greater representation than the heavily grieved.

4.2.2.6 Avatar Characteristics Contributing to the Targeting of the Grieved

All participants of dataset two regardless of their association to griefing were asked a variation of the same question,

- **Grieved:** "Regarding your avatar or character that you portray in-game, how often do you think the following are related to the decision of how the griefer picks you as their target?"
- **Griefer:** "Regarding the avatar or character that someone portrays in-game, how often do the following have any relation into your decision to target a player when performing acts of griefing?"

The avatar refers to the character in the MMORPG that the player portrays, gaining experience and accumulating virtual wealth. Avatar characteristics do not always match players' personal real-life demographics and are often very different (Ducheneaut, Wen, Yee, & Wadley, 2009). Avatar characteristics are also completely visible to all players and may be subject to griefing, while each player's personal demographics may remain hidden. The avatar related characteristics questioned were the avatar's name, gender, race / faction, level / experience, appearance, persona, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and the guild / legion / clan that the avatar belonged to. For each of these the respondent had the options of never, very rarely, on occasion, about half of the time, most of the time, and all of time. In summary, there were nine avatar related characteristics and each had six levels of frequency. The nine avatar characteristics are described below and the respondents had access to these definitions:

1. **Name:** the name given to your avatar upon first entering the MMORPG.
2. **Gender:** the gender of your avatar in-game.
3. **Race / Faction:** The race of your avatar and the faction they belong to. Races are defined in MMORPGs by different physical appearance. Examples such as humans, elves and dwarves. A faction usually consists of multiple races that go to war against another faction in the game fiction.
4. **Level / Experience:** The accumulated experience of your avatar, which in some MMORPGs equates to your “level”.
5. **Appearance:** The physical appearance of your avatar in-game.
6. **Persona:** The way you represent your avatar in-game. Perhaps you act much like you do in real life, or perhaps you create and role-play an entirely different persona.
7. **Ethnicity:** As opposed to the physically different races (of avatar characteristic number 3), ethnicity represents your avatar’s skin colour or in-game culture.
8. **Sexual Orientation:** The sexual preference of your avatar that you personify.
9. **Guild / Legion / Clan:** The guild, legion or clan that your avatar belongs to. These terms are used by different MMORPGs to represent a group of players that form together with associated goals and regularly play together.

4.2.2.6.1 Griefed Perception

Table 23 shows the results from the perception of the griefed players. This table is a cross tabulation of the griefed of varying degrees, against how often they agreed that their avatar’s characteristics affected the griefers decision to target them.

Table 23: Percentage of grieved (on various scales) that agreed each of their avatar's characteristics were related to grievers targeting them

		I have been subjected to grieving					Total n=642
		Very rarely n=180	On occasion n=362	About half the time n=57	Most of the time n=30	All of the time n=13	
Name	Never	56.1%	48.6%	50.9%	20.0%	30.8%	49.2%
	Very rarely	24.4%	24.6%	17.5%	26.7%	7.7%	23.7%
	On occasion	13.3%	21.0%	24.6%	30.0%	23.1%	19.6%
	About half of the time	3.3%	2.8%		13.3%	15.4%	3.4%
	Most of the time	2.2%	2.5%	5.3%	10.0%	23.1%	3.4%
	All of the time	0.6%	0.6%	1.8%			0.6%
Gender	Never	58.9%	50.0%	56.1%	40.0%	53.8%	52.6%
	Very rarely	22.2%	23.2%	28.1%	30.0%	23.1%	23.7%
	On occasion	11.1%	18.8%	7.0%	10.0%	23.1%	15.3%
	About half of the time	2.2%	5.2%	5.3%	6.7%		4.4%
	Most of the time	5.0%	2.2%		10.0%		3.1%
	All of the time	0.6%	0.6%	3.5%	3.3%		0.9%
Race / Faction	Never	28.9%	16.9%	19.3%	16.7%	23.1%	20.6%
	Very rarely	17.8%	13.3%	10.5%	20.0%		14.3%
	On occasion	21.7%	29.3%	26.3%	20.0%	30.8%	26.5%
	About half of the time	10.6%	14.6%	14.0%	23.3%	23.1%	14.0%
	Most of the time	18.3%	20.7%	24.6%	10.0%	7.7%	19.6%
	All of the time	2.8%	5.2%	5.3%	10.0%	15.4%	5.0%
Level / Exp	Never	22.8%	12.4%	3.5%	6.7%	23.1%	14.5%
	Very rarely	14.4%	8.3%	7.0%	6.7%	7.7%	9.8%
	On occasion	19.4%	27.9%	19.3%	16.7%	15.4%	24.0%
	About half of the time	11.7%	19.3%	19.3%	16.7%	15.4%	17.0%
	Most of the time	26.7%	23.2%	33.3%	36.7%	23.1%	25.7%
	All of the time	5.0%	8.8%	17.5%	16.7%	15.4%	9.0%
Appearance	Never	52.8%	43.9%	52.6%	36.7%	30.8%	46.6%
	Very rarely	21.7%	28.2%	21.1%	20.0%	15.4%	25.1%
	On occasion	16.1%	18.2%	10.5%	23.3%	23.1%	17.3%
	About half of the time	6.1%	6.6%	7.0%	10.0%		6.5%
	Most of the time	2.8%	3.0%	1.8%	6.7%	30.8%	3.6%
	All of the time	0.6%		7.0%	3.3%		0.9%
Persona	Never	52.8%	48.3%	50.9%	30.0%	30.8%	48.6%
	Very rarely	20.6%	22.4%	12.3%	30.0%	7.7%	21.0%
	On occasion	13.3%	19.3%	12.3%	16.7%	15.4%	16.8%
	About half of the time	6.7%	5.0%	12.3%	13.3%	7.7%	6.5%
	Most of the time	3.9%	4.4%	7.0%	10.0%	38.5%	5.5%
	All of the time	2.8%	0.6%	5.3%			1.6%

(Table 23 continued)

		I have been subjected to grieving					
Avatar Characteristic		Very rarely	On occasion	About half the time	Most of the time	All of the time	Total
		n=180	n=362	n=57	n=30	n=13	n=642
Ethnicity	Never	75.0%	68.0%	68.4%	43.3%	53.8%	68.5%
	Very rarely	17.2%	20.7%	17.5%	40.0%	15.4%	20.2%
	On occasion	5.6%	8.6%	3.5%	3.3%	7.7%	7.0%
	About half of the time	.6%	1.7%	3.5%	3.3%	7.7%	1.7%
	Most of the time	.6%	1.1%	3.5%	10.0%		1.6%
	All of the time	1.1%		3.5%		15.4%	.9%
Sexual Pref.	Never	75.0%	72.1%	73.7%	60.0%	53.8%	72.1%
	Very rarely	15.0%	16.6%	17.5%	26.7%	7.7%	16.5%
	On occasion	4.4%	7.2%	3.5%	6.7%	23.1%	6.4%
	About half of the time	2.8%	.6%	1.8%		7.7%	1.4%
	Most of the time	.6%	2.8%		6.7%		2.0%
	All of the time	2.2%	.8%	3.5%		7.7%	1.6%
Guild	Never	20.6%	16.3%	14.0%	10.0%	15.4%	17.0%
	Very rarely	19.4%	17.1%	12.3%	10.0%		16.7%
	On occasion	21.1%	25.7%	33.3%	13.3%	23.1%	24.5%
	About half of the time	17.2%	17.7%	12.3%	13.3%	23.1%	17.0%
	Most of the time	16.1%	17.7%	14.0%	33.3%	23.1%	17.8%
	All of the time	5.6%	5.5%	14.0%	20.0%	15.4%	7.2%

Looking at the totals column of Table 23, there are three clear standout avatar characteristics indicated by the grieved as to why their characters may be targeted by griefers. The first is the level or experience of the avatar (which in turn would indicate the strength or power of that avatar) which was indicated by the grieved as the most likely characteristic to be chosen as a target of the griefers. Only 14.5% (n=642) of the grieved indicated that they felt they were never targeted due to their avatar's level, with more than 50% (an exact figure of 51.7%) of all grieved specifying that they were targeted due to their avatar's level at least half of the time. These numbers show that the grieved most likely perceive they are targeted due to an unfair level of competition (see Table 15) in which they most likely have no chance to defend against their attacker, or to a lesser extent because their experience offers a challenge to the griefer (also see Table 15).

The guild, clan, or legion of a player avatar was also rated highly by the grieved as a reason they were chosen to be grieved. Only 17.0% (n=642) of the grieved indicated that they felt they were never targeted due to their avatar's guild, with 42% of all grieved specifying that they were targeted due to their avatar's guild at least half of the time.

These figures are not surprising, as guilds generate occasional rivalries over time (Williams et al., 2006), and even if a player does not have a reputation, the guild they are attached to may (Corneliussen & Rettberg, 2008), instantly inciting a griefer or even players of rival guilds that do not normally cause grief to action.

The third highest rated avatar characteristic to be selected by the grieved as a reason for griefers to target them was the avatar's race or faction. A little higher than the previous two discussed, 20.6% (n=642) of the grieved indicated that they felt they were never targeted due to their avatar's race or faction, with 38.6% of all grieved specifying that they were targeted due to their avatar's race or faction at least half of the time. If race and faction is looked at from the perspective of the most played western MMORPG, *World of Warcraft*, there are two factions, the Horde and Alliance. Each faction is in a virtual war with each other, comprising of allied races. Much like guild, it comes as no surprise that race and faction may contribute to a reason for grieving. Similar to *World of Warcraft* many MMORPGs foster this rivalry between factions (Corneliussen & Rettberg, 2008; Foo & Koivisto, 2004b), and some races have a particular flavour that is either loved or hated by the audiences. *World of Warcraft's* gnomes (of the Alliance) for example are much loved by the players controlling them for their small and cute stature, and often despised by the opposing faction (the Horde) (Cuddy & Nordlinger, 2009) for the same reasons.

The characteristics of the player avatar that are perceived by the grieved least likely related to be the reason for a griefer targeting that avatar are the avatar's ethnicity, with 68.5% of all grieved indicating that these characteristics were never targeted by griefers, and the avatar's sexual preference, at the highest with 72.1% of all grieved. The four characteristics of the player avatar that fell in the middle of the group of characteristics questioned, were the avatar's name, their gender, their appearance, and portrayed persona, at 49.2%, 52.6%, 46.6%, and 48.6% respectively indicating that those characteristics were never the cause of why they were targeted by a griefer.

There is quite a visible trend in that the more often a player was grieved, the more likely they were to indicate that the characteristics of their in-game avatar contributed towards the reason for their being grieved. This was especially evident in the name of their avatar (see next paragraph for how names can infuriate a player into grieving), their avatar's acquired level or experience, and also the guild they belonged to. Perhaps some of these grieved players that are being grieved more often have names that are offensive or easily mocked? Perhaps they are associated with guilds with a bad reputation or generally play avatars of lower level and experience?

Across well-traversed forums dedicated to MMORPGs, the names of an avatar are often a topic of discussion (DDO Online Forum Users, 2009; MMO-Champion Forum Users, 2010a; MMO-Champion Forum Users, 2010b; mmorpg.com Forum Users, 2010; Neverwinter Forum Users, 2013; RIFT Forum Users, 2011). Sometimes the rage of a forum member (that could easily be transferred to in-game griefing) is evident through their hatred of particular names. Popular names from fantasy fiction, such as J.R.R. Tolkien's *Legolas* of *Lord of the Rings* and R.A. Salvatore's *Drizzt* from *Forgotten Realms* novels, are often the subject of such hate. Not because they dislike the name itself, but because someone is not creative enough to think of their own name, and especially because when that name has already been taken for use (as names in MMORPGs must often be unique) by another player, some players come up with misspelt alternatives like "Legoolas", "Legolos", or "Drizzit" for example. Misspelling becomes an irritation for many players. On occasion the names are even deliberately misspelt to stand out, with an alternative such as "xXLegolasXx". There are other types of naming that could relate to being targeted for griefing, such as inappropriate or offensive names or parts of names that may be objectionable. Often a player will use abbreviations of an avatar name in the chat channel. For example, "Millexis" is shortened to "Mill" and "Vandis" to "Van". These abbreviations have no negative connotations. Occasionally one may come across a name such as "Cumulus" inspired by meteorology terminology, but then the word "Cum" is used as shorthand, and could be construed as offensive or may be targeted by griefers.

4.2.2.6.2 Griefer Perception

Table 24 shows the results from the perception of the griefers. This table is a cross tabulation of the griefer of varying degrees, against how often they agreed that a player's avatar characteristics was related to why they chose to target them for griefing.

Table 24: Percentage of grievers (on various scales) that agreed the avatar characteristics of their target were related to why they target a player

Avatar Characteristic		I have performed grieving					Total n=431
		Very rarely n=263	On occasion n=115	About half the time n=27	Most of the time n=12	All of the time n=14	
Name	Never	52.1%	48.7%	29.6%	8.3%	21.4%	47.6%
	Very rarely	17.9%	13.9%	11.1%	16.7%	14.3%	16.2%
	On occasion	21.3%	28.7%	29.6%	50.0%	42.9%	25.3%
	About half of the time	4.2%	3.5%	18.5%	25.0%	7.1%	5.6%
	Most of the time	3.4%	4.3%	3.7%			3.5%
	All of the time	1.1%	.9%	7.4%		14.3%	1.9%
Gender	Never	86.3%	87.0%	81.5%	66.7%	78.6%	85.4%
	Very rarely	8.4%	7.0%	11.1%	25.0%	7.1%	8.6%
	On occasion	3.0%	3.5%	3.7%	8.3%		3.2%
	About half of the time	2.3%	1.7%	3.7%			2.1%
	Most of the time					7.1%	.2%
	All of the time		.9%			7.1%	.5%
Race / Faction	Never	44.5%	38.3%	14.8%	16.7%	35.7%	39.9%
	Very rarely	11.8%	7.0%	14.8%	25.0%	14.3%	11.1%
	On occasion	18.3%	13.9%	18.5%		7.1%	16.2%
	About half of the time	8.4%	13.9%	22.2%	25.0%	7.1%	11.1%
	Most of the time	9.5%	19.1%	25.9%	16.7%	7.1%	13.2%
	All of the time	7.6%	7.8%	3.7%	16.7%	28.6%	8.4%
Level / Exp	Never	52.5%	33.0%	44.4%	16.7%	28.6%	45.0%
	Very rarely	15.2%	14.8%	7.4%	8.3%	35.7%	15.1%
	On occasion	13.3%	20.0%	11.1%			14.2%
	About half of the time	6.5%	13.9%	14.8%	16.7%		9.0%
	Most of the time	9.1%	13.9%	18.5%	33.3%		11.4%
	All of the time	3.4%	4.3%	3.7%	25.0%	35.7%	5.3%
Appearance	Never	75.3%	71.3%	55.6%	50.0%	64.3%	71.9%
	Very rarely	12.5%	13.9%	14.8%	16.7%	28.6%	13.7%
	On occasion	6.5%	7.0%	22.2%	16.7%		7.7%
	About half of the time	2.3%	2.6%		8.3%		2.3%
	Most of the time	2.7%	3.5%	3.7%	8.3%	7.1%	3.2%
	All of the time	.8%	1.7%	3.7%			1.2%
Persona	Never	70.0%	61.7%	63.0%	50.0%	57.1%	66.4%
	Very rarely	8.0%	10.4%	3.7%	8.3%		8.1%
	On occasion	10.3%	12.2%	14.8%	16.7%	7.1%	11.1%
	About half of the time	4.2%	3.5%	3.7%		7.1%	3.9%
	Most of the time	4.6%	7.0%	11.1%	16.7%	7.1%	6.0%
	All of the time	3.0%	5.2%	3.7%	8.3%	21.4%	4.4%

(Table 24 continued)

Avatar Characteristic		I have performed grieving					Total n=431
		Very rarely n=263	On occasion n=115	About half the time n=27	Most of the time n=12	All of the time n=14	
Ethnicity	Never	93.2%	91.3%	88.9%	100.0%	85.7%	92.3%
	Very rarely	4.2%	5.2%				3.9%
	On occasion	.8%	2.6%	3.7%			1.4%
	About half of the time	.8%	.9%	3.7%		7.1%	1.2%
	Most of the time	1.1%		3.7%			.9%
	All of the time					7.1%	.2%
Sexual Pref.	Never	93.5%	93.0%	81.5%	100.0%	71.4%	92.1%
	Very rarely	4.2%	1.7%	7.4%		7.1%	3.7%
	On occasion	1.1%	3.5%	7.4%			2.1%
	About half of the time	.4%	1.7%				.7%
	Most of the time	.8%					.5%
	All of the time			3.7%		21.4%	.9%
Guild	Never	34.6%	19.1%	14.8%	25.0%	28.6%	28.8%
	Very rarely	17.1%	7.8%	7.4%		7.1%	13.2%
	On occasion	20.5%	20.9%	25.9%	8.3%	14.3%	20.4%
	About half of the time	12.2%	17.4%	7.4%	8.3%		12.8%
	Most of the time	11.8%	26.1%	37.0%	33.3%	7.1%	17.6%
	All of the time	3.8%	8.7%	7.4%	25.0%	42.9%	7.2%

As perceived by griefers, the main avatar characteristics targeted for grieving were the guild, clan or legion they belonged to, the race and/or faction of the avatar, and their level of experience. Unlike the grieved perception though, the griefers indicated they chose their target the most often based on the guild of that player (as opposed to their level or experience), although even that was lower than what the grieved perceived, with 37.6% (n=431) of all griefers indicating that they targeted a player due to their avatar's guild at least half of the time, and still 28.8% specifying the guild was never a factor. Almost half of the griefers, 45%, said that they never target a player due to their level or experience, while only 25.7% of griefers indicated that they targeted a player due to their avatar's level or experience at least half of the time.

The least likely characteristics of a player's avatar that a griefer would target were, almost equally, the avatar's ethnicity and the avatar's sexual preference, with 92.3% and 92.1% of all griefers indicating that these characteristics were never related to the reason they targeted their victims. Following closely behind was the avatar's gender at 85.4% never targeted. The avatar's name, their appearance and their portrayed persona once again fell somewhere in the middle.

The most obvious point is that the players that very rarely cause grief were less likely to target someone due to their avatar characteristics, but this statement coincides with the fact that if they are very rarely grieving, they only have those very few instances to recall why they targeted a player. Also the grievers that were more likely to target someone for a particular avatar characteristic all of the time were those that caused grief more often. Take the avatar characteristic of guild for example. 3.8% (n=263) of those that very rarely grieved, targeted a player because of their avatar's guild, compared to 42.9% (n=14) of the grievers that grieved all of the time. With this in mind, it would benefit viewing this data only from the perspective of the heavily grieved and regular grievers (as indicated in Figure 8).

4.2.2.6.3 Comparisons of Associations

The data was compared from the perspective of the heavy grievers, grieved and intersector only (from Figure 8), rather than all participants. This table (Table 25) again confirms (like that of their personal demographics) that the grieved view the characteristics of their avatar as being likely to be the cause of the grieving much more than the grievers indicated that it was, with the exceptions of the avatar's name and their race or faction.

Table 25: Percentage of the different associations to grieving that agreed with each characteristic of the player's avatar being related to how a target is chosen

Avatar Characteristic		Association			
		Grieved n=88	Griever n=41	Intersector	
				(Grieved Perspective) n=12	(Grieved Perspective) n=12
Name	Never	38.6%	19.5%	41.7%	33.3%
	Very rarely	20.5%	9.8%	8.3%	25.0%
	On occasion	26.1%	43.9%	25.0%	16.7%
	About half of the time	5.7%	17.1%	8.3%	16.7%
	Most of the time	8.0%	2.4%	16.7%	
	All of the time	1.1%	7.3%		8.3%
Gender	Never	48.9%	75.6%	66.7%	83.3%
	Very rarely	28.4%	12.2%	25.0%	16.7%
	On occasion	11.4%	4.9%		
	About half of the time	5.7%	2.4%		
	Most of the time	3.4%	2.4%		
	All of the time	2.3%	2.4%	8.3%	
Race / Faction	Never	17.0%	17.1%	33.3%	33.3%
	Very rarely	11.4%	19.5%	16.7%	8.3%
	On occasion	26.1%	9.8%	16.7%	16.7%
	About half of the time	17.0%	19.5%	25.0%	16.7%
	Most of the time	20.5%	19.5%		16.7%
	All of the time	8.0%	14.6%	8.3%	8.3%
Level / Exp	Never	6.8%	34.1%	8.3%	33.3%
	Very rarely	5.7%	9.8%	16.7%	33.3%
	On occasion	18.2%	4.9%	16.7%	8.3%
	About half of the time	17.0%	14.6%	25.0%	
	Most of the time	36.4%	19.5%	8.3%	8.3%
	All of the time	15.9%	17.1%	25.0%	16.7%
Appearance	Never	43.2%	53.7%	58.3%	66.7%
	Very rarely	20.5%	14.6%	16.7%	33.3%
	On occasion	15.9%	19.5%	16.7%	
	About half of the time	8.0%	2.4%		
	Most of the time	8.0%	7.3%		
	All of the time	4.5%	2.4%	8.3%	
Persona	Never	40.9%	56.1%	50.0%	66.7%
	Very rarely	17.0%	4.9%	16.7%	
	On occasion	15.9%	17.1%		
	About half of the time	12.5%	2.4%	8.3%	8.3%
	Most of the time	11.4%	9.8%	16.7%	16.7%
	All of the time	2.3%	9.8%	8.3%	8.3%

(Table 25 continued)

Avatar Characteristic		Association			
		Griefed n=88	Griever n=41	Intersector	
				(Griefed Perspective) n=12	(Griefed Perspective) n=12
Ethnicity	Never	56.8%	87.8%	75.0%	100.0%
	Very rarely	25.0%		16.7%	
	On occasion	4.5%	2.4%		
	About half of the time	4.5%	4.9%		
	Most of the time	5.7%	2.4%		
	All of the time	3.4%	2.4%	8.3%	
Sexual Pref.	Never	65.9%	78.0%	75.0%	100.0%
	Very rarely	19.3%	7.3%	16.7%	
	On occasion	8.0%	4.9%		
	About half of the time	2.3%			
	Most of the time	2.3%			
	All of the time	2.3%	9.8%	8.3%	
Guild	Never	13.6%	17.1%	8.3%	33.3%
	Very rarely	11.4%	4.9%		8.3%
	On occasion	25.0%	19.5%	33.3%	16.7%
	About half of the time	14.8%	7.3%	8.3%	
	Most of the time	20.5%	31.7%	25.0%	16.7%
	All of the time	14.8%	19.5%	25.0%	25.0%

In the case of an avatar's name, the griefers indicated that they were more likely to target a player due to their avatar's name than was perceived by the griefed players. This is indicated by only 19.5% of the heavy griefers selecting that they never targeted a player due to their name, compared to the griefed 38.6% perception. This indication is consistent with 26.8% of the heavy griefers selecting that they targeted a player due to their name at least half of the time, compared to the griefed 14.8% perception. This is possibly due to only a small percentage of players having names that lead to griefing. There is a similar pattern with the race or faction of a player's avatar, except with a smaller difference between the groups.

Every other avatar characteristic was, as mentioned, viewed by the griefed as more likely to be related to the cause of the griefing than what the griefers indicated. What was interesting however was the sexual preference of the portrayed avatar, in that the griever either wasn't really interested and that it wasn't a factor of their griefing, or they chose to target a player all of the time because of their avatar's sexual preference, albeit only 9.8% of the heavy griefers indicated this.

4.2.3 Summary

The following is a summary of results analysed regarding the causes of griefing:

The research focused on 15 types of actions previously identified as griefing, and asked the respondents whether they believed these actions were griefing or not. The intent was to discover the difference between self-identified griefers and grieved players. The assumption was that types of actions less likely to be considered griefing are more likely to be performed without thought of consequence, or if subjected to, are more acceptable to the player than types regarded by more players as griefing.

- Nine actions were more likely be considered griefing than not by both griefers and grieved:
 - Verbal harassment
 - Spamming
 - Ninja looting
 - Corpse/spawn camping
 - Player blocking
 - Preying on new players
 - Scamming
 - Team disruption
 - Event disruption
- However, even though both groups rated the above as more likely to be griefing, grieved players rated them much higher as griefing than griefers.
- There was one action that was more likely to not be considered griefing by both griefers and the grieved:
 - Mob camping
- Griefers were also more likely to consider these as not griefing:
 - Player killing/ganking
 - Mob luring/training

Yee's Motivational Factors, as discussed in the methodology, were another focal point of the research. By discovering the respondent's motivations for playing MMORPGs from the perspective of different demographics, the research could identify which traits related to griefing.

- Males in general prefer achievement factors more than females, especially competition.

- The competition factor relates to challenging others, provocation and domination; all quite high griefer traits. Hence males are more likely to enjoy griefing.
- Female griefers are motivated by achievement factors of very similar value to male griefers, with competition rated very high among both.
- Griefed players value advancement and mechanics just as much as griefers. They however place a higher value on immersion and social factors than griefers.

The research asked respondents what they thought contributed towards the causes of griefing. At this point, demographics of the players and characteristics of a player's avatar were excluded from the options available, as questions later in the survey focused on these.

- All three groups (griefed, griefer and intersector) indicated very highly that players when in a group are more likely to cause grief due to safety in numbers.
- Griefing because of the anonymous nature, and griefing that was accidentally caused were other high reasons among all three groups.
- Griefers rated personal enjoyment very high in their reasons for causing grief, while the griefed rated it much lower, indicating that the griefed thought alternate reasons such as gain of virtual wealth and loot were motivating reasons to cause grief.

Respondents were asked how often they reveal their real-life demographics to other players. Those that chose to hide particular demographics more often indicated that perhaps they fear discrimination if they were to reveal them.

- Males are more likely than females to reveal to others their gender.
- Eighteen to 21 year olds are more likely to reveal their age than other age groups.
- The youngest (16 to 17) and the oldest (31 and over) are most likely to never reveal their age to anyone.
- Gay/Lesbian players were the least likely to not reveal their sexual orientation to anyone, with most having revealed it at least very rarely or more.
- Transsexuals are the most likely of all demographics to hide this fact about themselves, although sample size was quite small (n=8) and further research should be conducted.

With the previous results established, the research then focused on what factors contributed towards why a player was targeted for griefing. The grieved gave their perceptions on what they thought contributes to why they have been targeted by griefers, while the griefers themselves were able to give exact reasons regarding the factors that influence their decisions to target a player.

Targets of griefing: general factors:

- There was 83.6% of the grieved that believed they have been grieved anonymously compared to 41.1% of the griefers that indicated they have performed an anonymous attack.
- The more often the griefer causes grief, the more likely they indicated having selected targets for various reasons, including anonymously, a known target, easy targets and challenging targets. This indicates that the more regular griefers have more reasons to select their target, and it is perhaps not as anonymous as the grieved believe.
- Retaliation was indicated by all griefers as a very likely reason for selecting their target, particularly from the intersectorors. The indication here is that after being subjected to griefing the intersectorors have pursued vengeance.

Targets of griefing: factors related to player real-life demographics:

- The more often a player was subjected to griefing the more likely they indicated that their age, educational level, country of residence and ethnicity was related to the reason they were targeted.
- Females, 16 to 17 year olds, Australian residents, and Gay/Lesbian respondents were the most likely to indicate that that particular demographic was related to the reason for being targeted for griefing.
- Transsexuals were also more likely to indicate that this was a cause for being grieved, but the sample size included very few (n=8) transsexuals.
- The more often a griefer caused grief the more likely they were to indicate they chose a particular demographic for griefing exclusively (all the time), especially a player's sexual orientation. This indicates that perhaps that was the only factor some heavy griefers chose to target.
- The more often a griefer caused grief the more likely they were to indicate the gender of their target factored into their selection.
- Sixteen to 17 year old griefers are more likely to target someone due to a particular demographic (excluding gender) than other ages.

Targets of grieving: factors related to characteristics of a player's avatar:

- The grieved indicated that their avatar's most likely targeted characteristic is the level or experience of their avatar. While it was not clear if griefers are targeting inexperienced players or competitive players, it is most likely (according to previous data), that they are attacking severely disadvantaged players. There is still a small chance some griefers are seeking competitive and experienced players to grief.
- A grieved players' guild or clan, followed by their race or faction was also rated high as a reason their avatar has been targeted. The griefers rated the guild as the most likely avatar characteristic they would target for grieving with over 70% having done this at least very rarely.
- The grieved were least likely to indicate their avatar's ethnicity and sexual preference (if they even had one) were related to being targeted for grieving. Griefers indicated the same.
- Like the grieved, the griefers indicated that they were more likely than other characteristics of the avatar to target an avatar due to their level/experience or race/faction. However, they also target a player due to their name quite often.

4.3 Magnitude of Griefing

4.3.1 Introduction to Magnitude

Referring back to section 1.2 and the research questions, the question related to magnitude asked “What magnitude of griefing exists, and how much can be tolerated?” Many questions were asked of the respondents in the survey regarding the magnitude of griefing and this section analyses the responses.

Part five of the survey (Figure 13) was built solely to examine the magnitude of griefing. The analysis for this section of the thesis used dataset two (Tables 1 to 4) as the participants that completed the survey (n=656) had answered all questions in part five of the survey related to the magnitude of griefing.

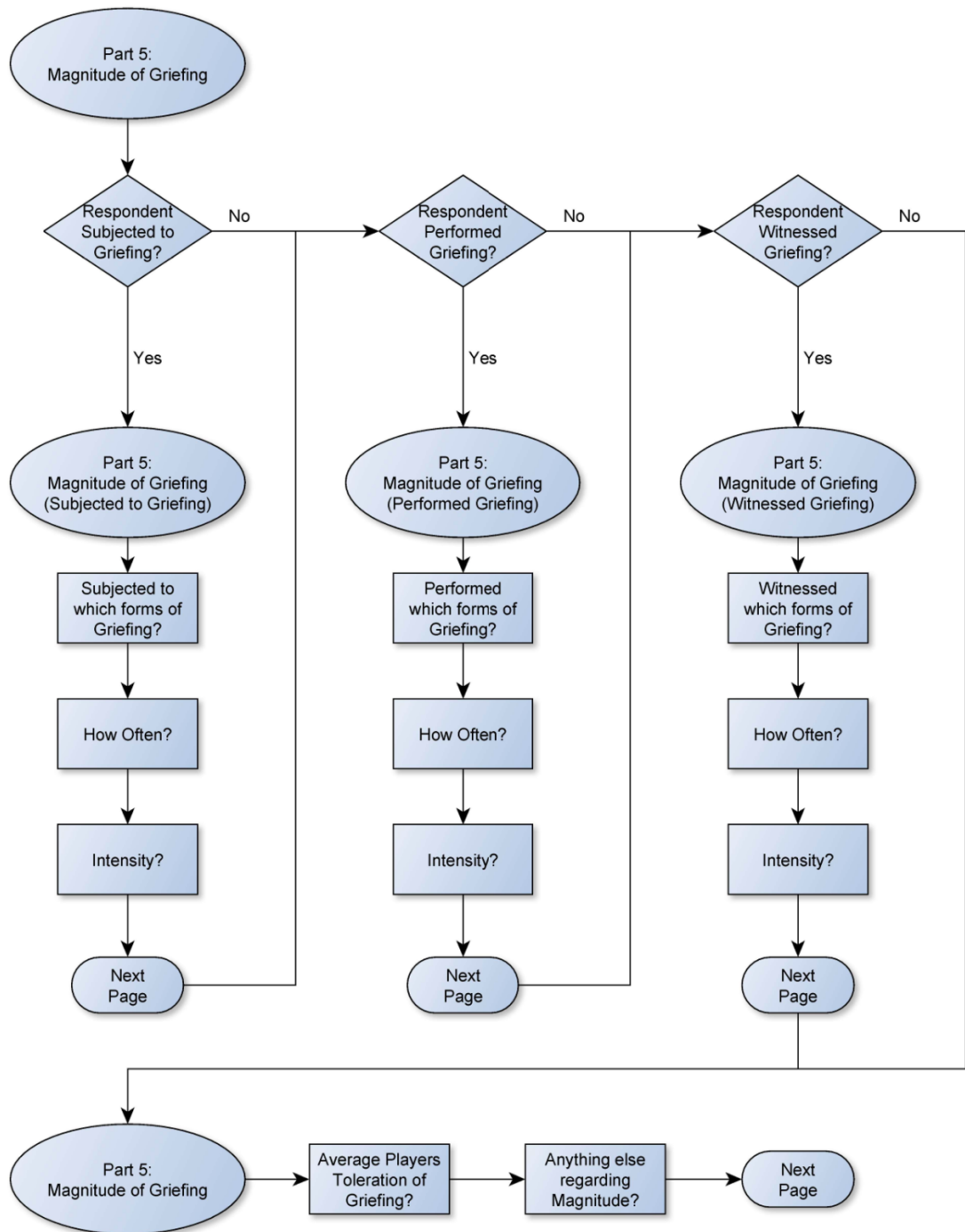


Figure 13: Survey question flow from part five of the survey

4.3.2 Results

4.3.2.1 Pervasiveness of the Different Types of Griefing

All participants of dataset two regardless of their association to griefing were asked a refinement of the same question,

- **Griefed:** “Have you been subjected to the following types of griefing?”
- **Griever:** “Have you performed the following types of griefing?”
- **Witness:** “Have you witnessed the following types of griefing between other players?”

The options available to participants were setup with a checkbox so that they could tick all options they agreed with. These options were the same set of 15 different types of actions presented earlier in the thesis, and reproduced here:

1. **Verbal harassment** - Intentional misuse of the chat interface or voice system in order to offend, harass, insult, threaten, or humiliate another player.
2. **Spamming** - Intentionally filling a chat channel repeatedly with messages of low relevance, utility, or messages that are against the game rules (such as in-game currency selling).
3. **Kill stealing** - When a player attempts to kill a mob that is already engaged in combat with another player, in order to reap their reward of experience, items or in-game currency.
4. **Ninja looting** - Taking loot that was earned by another player, by speed, guile, or a cheat. Typically, a player quickly loots mob corpses that they should not be looting.
5. **Player killing / ganking** - A player seeks out and kills players that are at a disadvantage. Most commonly they attack players with little health, and/or that are already engaged in combat.
6. **Corpse / spawn camping** - A player repeatedly kills the same individual multiple times, remaining in a location where the victim will respawn or resurrect (usually in a weakened state) and cannot escape the attack.
7. **Mob camping** - When a player remains in a location where a particular mob spawns in order to get items that only drop from this mob.
8. **Mob luring / training** - A player pulls or leads a hostile NPC or creature along behind them and attempts to get it to attack another player who does not desire that engagement.

9. **Player blocking** - A player obstructs another player's escape path to intentionally cause that character's death or confinement. A player may also obstruct another player's view or path from in-game resources (such as items, NPCs and mailboxes).
10. **Exploiting loopholes** - Unintended flaw in the game that a player exploits to their advantage. In the past loopholes such as duplicating items, activating items through solid walls and accessing restricted content have been exploited by some players.
11. **Preying on new players** - The killing of new and inexperienced players for fun, even though there is little direct benefit from attacker to the victim.
12. **Scamming** - Any method by which a player attempts to con another player out of something. This could include swindling items using fraudulent schemes or unfair trades.
13. **Team disruption** - When a player deliberately performs actions detrimental to their team, including friendly fire, wasting key game elements, luring unwanted mobs and colluding with the opposition.
14. **Event disruption** - When an event organized by players is purposefully interrupted by others.
15. **Role-play disruption** - Intentionally talking out of character to disrupt players that are role-playing their characters.

The answers to these questions were used to guide additional questions in the survey. For example if a griever selected that they had performed both “1. Verbal Harassment” and “4. Ninja Looting”, then future questions would only refer to these two types of griefing. Of course, each participant was able to select any combination of these types of griefing from one, to all 15. In future questions they would therefore be questioned regarding only the types of griefing that they had selected.

4.3.2.1.1 Griefed Perception

As described in the previous section, the griefed players were asked, “Have you been subjected to the following types of griefing?” Table 26 outlines their response. As it was a simple yes or no, the different columns describe the griefed players of various frequencies and the percentage of those that have been subjected to that type of griefing.

Table 26: Percentage of grieved (separated by frequency of grieving) that have been subjected to each type of grieving

I have been subjected to these types of grieving	The amount that I have been subjected to grieving					Total
	Very rarely n=180	On occasion n=362	About half of the time n=57	Most of the time n=30	All of the time n=13	
Verbal Harassment	72.8%	84.0%	80.7%	90.0%	92.3%	81.0%
Spamming	66.7%	71.5%	80.7%	83.3%	76.9%	71.7%
Kill Stealing	49.4%	69.3%	84.2%	83.3%	76.9%	65.9%
Ninja Looting	55.6%	74.0%	80.7%	76.7%	61.5%	69.3%
Player Killing / Ganking	59.4%	79.8%	86.0%	100.0%	84.6%	75.7%
Corpse / Spawn Camping	54.4%	74.0%	86.0%	90.0%	84.6%	70.6%
Mob Camping	32.2%	52.2%	57.9%	66.7%	61.5%	48.0%
Mob Luring / Training	23.3%	45.9%	42.1%	70.0%	38.5%	40.2%
Player Blocking	33.3%	42.0%	42.1%	53.3%	61.5%	40.5%
Exploiting Loopholes	30.6%	49.2%	57.9%	70.0%	76.9%	46.3%
Preying on New Players	30.6%	52.2%	64.9%	80.0%	53.8%	48.6%
Scamming	32.2%	35.4%	40.4%	60.0%	38.5%	36.1%
Team Disruption	41.1%	59.4%	61.4%	80.0%	76.9%	55.8%
Event Disruption	25.6%	50.0%	57.9%	50.0%	53.8%	43.9%
Role-Play Disruption	18.9%	22.4%	29.8%	26.7%	15.4%	22.1%

Across all grieved players, from those very rarely grieved to those grieved all of the time, the first six types of grieving stood out as being the types that the grieved have been subjected to the most (not the most frequently, but been subjected to at least once). The total column indicates that verbal harassment has affected the most people (81.0%, n=642 grieved players out of the potential n=656 that were surveyed), and even many of those that are rarely or occasionally subjected to grieving have been grieved through verbal harassment at least once. Player killing / ganking has also happened to a large amount of players (75.7%), followed by spamming (71.7%), corpse / spawn killing (70.6%), ninja looting (69.3%), kill stealing (65.9%), and team disruption (55.8%).

The remaining eight types of grieving have been directed at less than 50% of the total grieved surveyed. While seemingly less widespread, an upcoming section (4.3.2.2) will analyse the frequency of occurrence among those who have experienced these forms of grieving. As expected, the more often a player has been subjected to grieving, the more likely the chance is that they have encountered and been subjected to each type of grieving.

The second lowest griefing type was scamming (at an average of 36.1%). It is quite possible this is more of a niche type of griefing as the griefer would not expect players to fall for the same scams over and over. The least encountered type of griefing was role-play disruption among all levels of grieved (22.1%) at an average of just less than half that of the next lowest type of griefing. The fact that only 14.6% of the surveyed audience indicated that they preferred role-playing servers (Table 3 in 4.1) contributed to the low spread of role-play related disruptive behaviour. In light of this, a small table was constructed with only the players interested in role-playing included (Table 27).

Table 27: Percentage of role-players (separated by frequency of being subjected to griefing) that have been subjected to role-play disruption

	The amount that I have been subjected to griefing					Total
	Very rarely	On occasion	About half of the time	Most of the time	All of the time	
Role-players only	n=29	n=49	n=8	n=5	n=1	n=92
Role-Play Disruption	62.1%	67.3%	62.5%	80.0%	100.0%	63.5%

As can be seen, there is a huge difference between Table 26 and Table 27 regarding the pervasiveness of role-play disruption. When considering only the players that engage in role-play (creating a persona, and staying in character at all times), it was observed that nearly two thirds of them (63.5%, n=92) have had their role-play disrupted by a griefer.

4.3.2.1.2 Griefer Perception

As described in the previous section, the griefers were asked, "Have you performed the following types of griefing?" Table 28 outlines their response. As it was a simple yes or no, the different columns describe the griefers of various frequencies and the percentage of those that have performed each type of griefing.

Table 28: Percentage of griefers (separated by frequency of griefing) that have performed each type of griefing

I have performed these types of griefing	The amount that I have performed griefing					Total n=431
	Very rarely n=263	On occasion n=115	About half of the time n=27	Most of the time n=12	All of the time n=14	
Verbal Harassment	38.4%	52.2%	77.8%	50.0%	78.6%	46.2%
Spamming	7.6%	20.0%	37.0%	25.0%	57.1%	14.8%
Kill Stealing	43.3%	54.8%	70.4%	66.7%	71.4%	49.7%
Ninja Looting	15.6%	27.0%	40.7%	41.7%	57.1%	22.3%
Player Killing / Ganking	66.9%	80.0%	92.6%	91.7%	85.7%	73.3%
Corpse / Spawn Camping	42.2%	64.3%	81.5%	75.0%	78.6%	52.7%
Mob Camping	25.9%	38.3%	48.1%	66.7%	50.0%	32.5%
Mob Luring / Training	19.0%	28.7%	29.6%	41.7%	35.7%	23.4%
Player Blocking	9.5%	18.3%	55.6%	33.3%	64.3%	17.2%
Exploiting Loopholes	5.3%	23.5%	29.6%	25.0%	57.1%	13.9%
Preying on New Players	11.0%	23.5%	40.7%	66.7%	78.6%	20.0%
Scamming	4.6%	7.0%	18.5%	41.7%	35.7%	8.1%
Team Disruption	9.1%	21.7%	33.3%	16.7%	64.3%	16.0%
Event Disruption	7.2%	25.2%	40.7%	25.0%	64.3%	16.5%
Role-Play Disruption	6.5%	10.4%	25.9%	41.7%	57.1%	11.4%

When viewing how widespread each type of griefing is from the perspective of the griefers (Table 28), it can immediately be identified that the density (the grey shading) is less than that of the grieved (Table 26). Only two of the 15 types of griefing have been performed by more than 50% (n=431) of the griefers. These two types were player killing / ganking (at 73.3%), and corpse / spawn camping (52.7%).

In particular, player killing / ganking stands out as having been conducted by a large percentage of individuals. The following is a calculation of the percentage of players (based on the representative sample collected for this thesis and assuming the percentage of griefers is also representative of the total population) on average that have at killed or ganked another player who is at a severe disadvantage at least once:

1. Multiply the amount of self-identified griefers (n=431) by the percentage that have performed the griefing type of player killing / ganking (73.3%). $431 \times 0.733 = 316$.
2. Divide this number of players (n=316) by the total amount of respondents (n=656). $316/656 = 0.482$ or 48.2% of the respondents have killed or ganked another player at least once.

Assuming the sample is representative, almost half of all players partake in this type of griefing. Using similar calculations, approximately one third of all players have performed verbal harassment, kill stealing and corpse / spawn camping on at least one occasion. The actual frequency of each action will be discussed in section 4.3.2.2.

There is a large difference between the pervasiveness of some of the types of griefing amongst the grieved and grievers. While 81.0% (n=642) of grieved had been exposed to verbal harassment, only 46.2% (n=431) of the grievers had performed it. The largest discrepancy however was spamming, in that 71.7% of all grieved indicated they had been exposed to it, compared to just 14.8% of all grievers having performed it. This would indicate that those grievers that are performing both verbal harassment and spamming are subjecting many people to it. The same trends were seen with ninja looting, team disruption, scamming, and exploiting loopholes, once again suggesting the relatively smaller amount of grievers performing these are subjecting more players to them. In contrast, an almost equal percentage of grieved had been exposed to player killing as the percentage of grievers that performed it (75.7% versus 73.3%). This indicates a more one-to-one ratio.

A comparison to the percentage of grieved aside, Table 28 demonstrates additional information about the grievers. As a player performs griefing with more regularity, they are more likely to have performed each type of griefing. This is especially evident in the griefing type termed preying on new players. Only 11.0% of those that only very rarely caused grief had attempted to grief new players, while a massive 78.6% of those that grieved all the time had performed this type of griefing. The percentage saw a steady increase at each level of griefing. While not quite as dramatic, the following types of griefing also saw large rises at each step from grievers of rare regularity to fulltime grievers; Event disruption (with a 57.1% increase from very rare grievers to fulltime grievers), team disruption (55.2% increase), player blocking (54.8% increase), exploiting loopholes (51.8% increase), role-play disruption (50.7% increase), and spamming (with a 49.5% increase). In contrast, the griefing type known as player killing / ganking did not see a large rise between each level of griefer, but rather remained fairly steady with 69.9% of those that had very rarely grieved indicating they had performed this type of griefing, compared to 85.7% of the fulltime grievers. As discussed earlier, almost half of all players have enjoyed killing those at disadvantage on at least one occasion.

4.3.2.1.3 Witness Perception

As described in the previous section, the witnesses to grieving incidents (which made up all but four of the respondents at n=652) were asked, “Have you witnessed the following types of grieving between other players?” Table 29 outlines their response. As it was a simple yes or no, the different columns describe the witnesses of various frequencies and the percentage of those that have witnessed that type of grieving.

Table 29: Percentage of witnesses (separated by frequency of witnessing grieving) that have witnessed each type of grieving

I have witnessed these types of grieving	The amount that I have witnessed grieving					Total n=652
	Very rarely n=61	On occasion n=302	About half of the time n=128	Most of the time n=107	All of the time n=54	
Verbal Harassment	75.4%	92.1%	98.4%	94.4%	98.1%	92.6%
Spamming	63.9%	80.5%	89.1%	90.7%	85.2%	82.7%
Kill Stealing	44.3%	74.2%	78.1%	81.3%	85.2%	74.2%
Ninja Looting	47.5%	76.2%	89.1%	74.8%	85.2%	76.5%
Player Killing / Ganking	59.0%	82.5%	90.6%	86.9%	90.7%	83.3%
Corpse / Spawn Camping	55.7%	78.1%	86.7%	82.2%	79.6%	78.5%
Mob Camping	39.3%	62.9%	69.5%	62.6%	72.2%	62.7%
Mob Luring / Training	31.1%	54.3%	64.1%	57.9%	70.4%	56.0%
Player Blocking	31.1%	50.0%	58.6%	57.9%	64.8%	52.5%
Exploiting Loopholes	31.1%	58.6%	65.6%	67.3%	83.3%	60.9%
Preying on New Players	49.2%	79.5%	89.1%	81.3%	85.2%	79.3%
Scamming	59.0%	67.9%	82.0%	72.9%	79.6%	71.6%
Team Disruption	36.1%	61.9%	78.1%	69.2%	83.3%	65.6%
Event Disruption	27.9%	60.3%	71.9%	63.6%	74.1%	61.2%
Role-Play Disruption	34.4%	48.7%	54.7%	54.2%	51.9%	49.7%

The 15 types of grieving have been witnessed at least on one occasion by the majority of players. The clearly widespread types of grieving witnessed in order from highest to lowest were verbal harassment (92.6%) of the audience, followed by player killing / ganking (83.3%), spamming (82.7%), preying on new players (79.3%), corpse / spawn killing (78.5%), ninja looting (76.5%), kill stealing (74.2%) and scamming (71.6%). The rest were still quite high, having been witnessed by a minimum of 49.7% of all respondents at least once. The lowest type of grieving witnessed, at 49.7% was role-play disruption, followed closely by player blocking (52.5%) and mob luring or training (56.0%).

As anticipated, the percentage of all grieving types witnessed was higher than the percentage that the grieved indicated. This was expected as many witnesses can

observe a single griefing attack, but not all types of griefing can be conducted on more than one individual. On all occasions, except for three which will be discussed, the percentage that witnessed each type of griefing at least on a single occasion was approximately 12% ($\pm 5\%$) higher than the percentage of grieved who indicated they had been subjected to at least once. The exclusions to this were scamming where witnesses indicated a 35.5% higher rate, preying on new players at a 30.7% higher rate, and role-play disruption at a 27.6% higher rate. It is interesting to note that scamming was witnessed at a much higher rate than those who have actually been targeted for scamming. This could imply that the griefer is not trying to hide their scams, but is rather quite transparent, or perhaps players that are scammed were reluctant to admit to this in the survey.

4.3.2.1.4 Comparison of Associations

The data was compared from the perspective of the heavy griefers, grieved and intersector only (from Figure 8), rather than all participants. Table 30 outlines their responses. The intersector gave two responses from their point-of-view of being grieved and performing grief.

Table 30: Percentage of the different associations to griefing that have been associated to each type of griefing

I have been associated with these types of griefing	Association			
	Grieved n=88	Griefer n=41	Intersector	
			(Grieved Perspective) n=12	(Griefer Perspective) n=12
Verbal Harassment	84.1%	73.2%	91.7%	66.7%
Spamming	81.8%	43.9%	75.0%	25.0%
Kill Stealing	83.0%	78.0%	83.3%	41.7%
Ninja Looting	79.5%	51.2%	58.3%	25.0%
Player Killing / Ganking	89.8%	90.2%	91.7%	91.7%
Corpse / Spawn Camping	87.5%	80.5%	83.3%	75.0%
Mob Camping	62.5%	63.4%	50.0%	16.7%
Mob Luring / Training	53.4%	39.0%	25.0%	16.7%
Player Blocking	48.9%	58.5%	41.7%	33.3%
Exploiting Loopholes	62.5%	36.6%	75.0%	33.3%
Preying on New Players	69.3%	58.5%	58.3%	50.0%
Scamming	45.5%	36.6%	50.0%	0.0%
Team Disruption	68.2%	41.5%	75.0%	25.0%
Event Disruption	54.5%	43.9%	58.3%	41.7%
Role-Play Disruption	29.5%	36.6%	8.3%	41.7%

When reviewing the entire respondent sample in Tables 26 to 29, verbal harassment was always the griefing type that most people have been exposed to. Table 30 shows a shift to player killing / ganking as the most ubiquitous griefing type amongst the heavily grieved, grievers and intersectorers. Those that grief at least half of their time or more, are more likely to have attempted at least on one occasion, to kill or gank other players than any other type of griefing. This is followed by corpse and spawn camping, kill stealing and then verbal harassment. It would appear the least likely types of griefing that these regular grievers have attempted at equal rates of 36.6% are role-play disruption, scamming and exploiting loopholes. Still, this equates to a little over one third of the regular griefing players at least having attempted these types of griefing on one or more occasions.

The intersectorers columns show some interesting statistics, in that some types of griefing have large differences when comparing the intersectorers point-of-view as a griefer and grieved player. For example while half of the intersectorers indicated they have been targeted for scamming, none of them have actually scammed anyone themselves. The strange result of how 41.7% of intersectorers have performed role-play disruption compared to 8.3% that have been grieved in this manner can be explained by the fact that only two of the intersectorers indicated they prefer role-playing servers. This means 10 intersectorers probably do not engage in and can't be disrupted in this way. The more interesting analysis is revealed in the frequency section regarding the intersectorers (section 4.3.2.3.4) which shows how often each of these types of griefing happens.

4.3.2.2 Frequency of the Different Types of Griefing

Following on from the previous question, all participants of dataset two regardless of their association to griefing were asked a refinement of the same question,

- **Grieved:** "How *often* are / were you grieved in the methods you chose above?"
- **Griever:** "How *often* do / did you perform the types of griefing you chose above?"
- **Witness:** "How *often* do / did you witness the types of griefing you chose above?"

The previous question asked only if they had been subjected, performed or witnessed each type of griefing, not how often each type happened. This question follows on by conditionally asking (the condition was their previous question's answer) how often each type of griefing happens to the respondent.

The options available to participants were setup with radio-buttons, meaning that they could only select one of the options available per type of grieving. These options relating the amount of occurrences were “once or twice a year”, “once a month”, “once a fortnight”, “once a week”, “once a day”, and “multiple times per day”. As discussed before, the participants were only questioned about the types of grieving they had selected at the start of part five of the survey.

4.3.2.2.1 Griefed Perception

As described in the parent section (4.3.2.2), the griefed players were asked, “How often are / were you griefed in the methods you chose above?” Table 31 outlines their response. This reviews the answers from all the respondents that had been subjected to grieving (n=642).

Table 31: Percentage of griefed (out of n=642) that have been subjected to each type of grieving and the frequency of these occurrences

I have been subjected to these types of grieving	Frequency						
	Never	Once or twice a year	Once a month	Once a fortnight	Once a week	Once a day	Multiple times a day
Verbal Harassment	19.0%	25.7%	17.8%	10.4%	15.6%	5.6%	5.9%
Spamming	28.4%	11.2%	10.7%	7.0%	11.7%	10.1%	20.9%
Kill Stealing	34.2%	13.1%	14.3%	11.2%	15.7%	6.2%	5.3%
Ninja Looting	30.6%	24.5%	19.9%	10.3%	9.7%	2.5%	2.5%
Player Killing / Ganking	24.4%	15.7%	15.1%	12.3%	16.0%	7.5%	9.0%
Corpse / Spawn Camping	29.4%	21.7%	17.1%	12.1%	11.1%	5.0%	3.6%
Mob Camping	52.2%	11.5%	10.9%	8.1%	9.7%	3.9%	3.7%
Mob Luring / Training	59.9%	15.6%	10.7%	6.4%	5.1%	1.2%	1.1%
Player Blocking	59.5%	12.9%	11.4%	6.2%	6.7%	1.9%	1.4%
Exploiting Loopholes	53.8%	20.1%	10.4%	5.1%	4.7%	2.8%	3.1%
Preying on New Players	51.4%	19.9%	8.1%	5.5%	6.9%	4.2%	4.0%
Scamming	64.0%	20.4%	6.5%	3.1%	3.1%	0.9%	2.0%
Team Disruption	44.2%	13.6%	15.3%	10.3%	9.3%	4.2%	3.1%
Event Disruption	56.1%	15.9%	12.9%	6.2%	5.5%	1.7%	1.7%
Role-Play Disruption	78.0%	7.6%	2.8%	3.4%	4.0%	2.5%	1.7%

Note: ‘Never’ column indicates the amount of griefed players that have never been subjected to each type of grieving (it has a separate grey scale). The remaining griefed indicated the frequency they were subjected to each type.

The most frequent type of grieving that the griefed have experienced by a large amount is spamming. Spamming happens multiple times per day to 20.9% of players that indicated they have been griefed. Assuming the sample is representative, spamming is exposed to one-fifth of all players regularly per day. This type of grieving though can be

easily spread far and wide through chat channels that the majority of players are connected to. It does depend on what players consider griefing as well in regards to spamming. As there can be spamming in the form of illegal currency trading (in-game currency traded for real-world currency and vice-versa) through the chat channel, or there could be players typing offensive or random text in the chat channel. As stated earlier in section 4.2.2.1, 26% of the respondents indicated that they did not think spamming was griefing. Personally, the author would consider in the example above, that selling gold illegally is simply spam, similar to email spam, whereas offensive spam would indeed be griefing.

Following on from spamming, player killing / ganking is the type of griefing that most frequently happens in MMORPGs. 9.0% of all grieved indicated that it happened to them multiple times per day. This is not surprising given that the previous section confirmed that many griefers (the most out of any type of griefing) had killed or ganked other players on one or more occasions. The other four types of griefing in the top six rows of Table 31 rounded out the most frequent types of griefing. They were verbal harassment, kill stealing, ninja looting, and corpse / spawn camping.

While previous analysis indicated that many have been exposed to, or performed, the type of griefing ‘preying on new players’, it appears that it is not as frequently occurring as the types discussed in the previous paragraph. There are only small percentages of players being subjected to this type of griefing multiple times a day (4.0%) to once a fortnight (5.5%), compared to for example player killing happening to 9.0% of players multiple times a day up to 12.3% of players a fortnight. A player can only be new to a game for a certain amount of time, before they feel comfortable and more experienced; hence why it seems to be less frequent.

The least frequent type of griefing indicated by those being grieved is role-play disruption. Once again this is due to the fact that only 14.6% of respondents preferred role-playing servers (Table 3). By focusing on only the players that are grieved and also indicated they prefer role-playing servers (n=92), different results emerge (Table 32).

Table 32: Percentage of grieved role-players subjected to role-play disruption and the frequency of these

Role-players only n=92	Frequency					
	Once or twice a year	Once a month	Once a fortnight	Once a week	Once a day	Multiple times a day
Role-Play Disruption	34.5%	12.7%	15.5%	18.2%	11.4%	7.7%

Table 32 indicates that players that prefer role-playing servers have their role-play disrupted quite regularly, with just over 19% at least daily, and an additional 18.2% weekly.

The less frequent types of griefing were mob luring and training, player blocking, scamming and event disruption. These were all happening to approximately 3% of the grieved once a day or more, more likely to occur not at all, or less frequently. Scamming was one type where (apart from those whom had never been subjected to it) the grieved were mainly only subjected once or twice a year; very infrequent. It could be assumed that if you have been scammed once, you become wiser to the deception and better at avoiding certain scams.

4.3.2.2.2 Griefer Perception

As described in the parent section (4.3.2.2), the grieved players were asked, “How often do / did you perform the types of griefing you chose above?” Table 33 outlines their response. This reviews the answers from all the respondents that had performed griefing (n=431).

Table 33: Percentage of griefers (out of n=431) that have performed each type of griefing and the frequency of these actions

I have performed these types of griefing	Frequency						
	Never	Once or twice a year	Once a month	Once a fortnight	Once a week	Once a day	Multiple times a day
Verbal Harassment	53.9%	13.9%	10.0%	6.7%	10.4%	2.8%	2.3%
Spamming	85.3%	6.0%	2.3%	1.4%	3.2%	0.9%	0.9%
Kill Stealing	50.3%	17.9%	10.7%	7.2%	7.0%	3.0%	3.9%
Ninja Looting	77.6%	11.6%	3.5%	2.6%	2.1%	0.7%	1.9%
Player Killing / Ganking	26.6%	18.3%	11.4%	10.9%	12.3%	7.0%	13.5%
Corpse / Spawn Camping	47.4%	19.3%	10.4%	8.1%	7.2%	3.2%	4.4%
Mob Camping	67.5%	9.0%	8.4%	4.4%	4.9%	2.6%	3.2%
Mob Luring / Training	76.6%	11.4%	4.6%	3.2%	1.9%	1.4%	0.9%
Player Blocking	82.8%	6.7%	2.8%	1.9%	2.6%	1.6%	1.6%
Exploiting Loopholes	86.0%	7.2%	2.1%	1.2%	0.5%	0.9%	2.1%
Preying on New Players	80.0%	5.8%	4.6%	2.6%	2.8%	1.9%	2.3%
Scamming	91.9%	4.9%	1.6%	0.5%	0.9%	0.0%	0.2%
Team Disruption	84.0%	5.1%	3.9%	1.4%	2.8%	0.7%	2.1%
Event Disruption	83.5%	7.9%	3.0%	0.9%	3.0%	0.5%	1.2%
Role-Play Disruption	88.5%	4.6%	1.9%	1.9%	1.9%	0.5%	0.7%

Note: ‘Never’ column indicates the amount of griefers that have never performed each type of griefing (it has a separate grey scale). The remaining griefers indicated the frequency they performed each type.

Player killing / ganking is the type of griefing the griefers indicated they do the most often; more than 20% of griefers kill (or gank) other players at least once a day. This equates to 13.5% of all respondents (not just the griefers themselves) having ganked or killed other players at least once a day. The next most frequent, corpse and spawn killing was only performed by 7.6% of griefers at least daily, which is quite a large difference to 20.5% of griefers ganking. Verbal harassment, kill stealing, corpse and spawn camping, and mob camping are also performed often by the griefers.

Scamming was performed very infrequently by griefers, with only 4.9% of griefers indicating they scam just one or twice a year, 1.6% (or exactly seven of the 431 griefers) once a month, and another 1.6% more than once a month. The theory proposed previously that the grieved become wiser at avoiding scams after being subjected to one or two may not necessarily be true, it may be scamming behaviour is not happening very often, or is carried out at a very high level of intensity by a very small number of griefers.

Additional irregular griefing types were griefers that exploit loopholes (performed by only 4.7% of griefers fortnightly or more), role-play disruption (5.0% fortnightly or more), event disruption (5.6% fortnightly or more), and spamming (6.4% fortnightly or more).

A question that should be asked though; Are the griefers more likely to perform actions that they don't consider as griefing? To discover this, an analysis was performed on only the regular griefers of dataset two (Figure 8), in which the response to whether they consider each action to be a form of griefing or not was compared against the frequency they performed each action. Table 34 outlines the results.

Table 34: Cross-tabulation showing the percentage of regular grievers that believe an action is grieving and how frequent they perform those actions

Do you believe this action is grieving?		Frequency that you perform this action						
		Never	Once or twice a year	Once a month	Once a fortnight	Once a week	Once a day	Multiple times a day
Verbal Harassment	Never	7.3%			2.4%	7.3%	2.4%	2.4%
	Sometimes	14.6%	2.4%	4.9%	7.3%	7.3%	9.8%	4.9%
	Always	4.9%	4.9%	2.4%		12.2%		2.4%
Spamming	Never	24.4%						2.4%
	Sometimes	14.6%	4.9%	2.4%	2.4%	12.2%	4.9%	2.4%
	Always	17.1%		2.4%	4.9%	4.9%		
Kill Stealing	Never	4.9%	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%	7.3%	2.4%	7.3%
	Sometimes	12.2%	4.9%	7.3%	12.2%	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%
	Always	4.9%	2.4%	2.4%		7.3%		9.8%
Ninja Looting	Never	4.9%	2.4%			4.9%	2.4%	
	Sometimes	24.4%	7.3%	2.4%		2.4%	2.4%	2.4%
	Always	19.5%	4.9%	2.4%	2.4%	4.9%		9.8%
Player Killing / Ganking	Never					9.8%	2.4%	22.0%
	Sometimes	4.9%			7.3%	12.2%	7.3%	9.8%
	Always	4.9%	2.4%			2.4%	4.9%	9.8%
Corpse / Spawn Camping	Never	2.4%				2.4%	2.4%	14.6%
	Sometimes	4.9%			9.8%	7.3%	2.4%	
	Always	12.2%	7.3%	2.4%	7.3%	9.8%	9.8%	4.9%
Mob Camping	Never	17.1%	2.4%	7.3%	2.4%	2.4%	4.9%	12.2%
	Sometimes	14.6%	2.4%	4.9%	7.3%	4.9%	4.9%	2.4%
	Always	4.9%					4.9%	
Mob Luring / Training	Never	22.0%		2.4%		2.4%	2.4%	2.4%
	Sometimes	26.8%	2.4%		4.9%	2.4%	7.3%	
	Always	12.2%	2.4%	4.9%	2.4%	2.4%		
Player Blocking	Never	4.9%	2.4%	2.4%		2.4%	2.4%	2.4%
	Sometimes	22.0%	4.9%	2.4%	7.3%	2.4%	4.9%	4.9%
	Always	14.6%	7.3%	2.4%		4.9%	2.4%	2.4%
Exploiting Loopholes	Never	26.8%	2.4%	2.4%				4.9%
	Sometimes	14.6%	7.3%		2.4%	2.4%	2.4%	7.3%
	Always	22.0%					4.9%	
Preying on New Players	Never	7.3%		2.4%	2.4%	7.3%	7.3%	4.9%
	Sometimes	14.6%	7.3%	2.4%	2.4%	7.3%		2.4%
	Always	19.5%				2.4%	7.3%	2.4%
Scamming	Never	12.2%	4.9%	4.9%		2.4%		2.4%
	Sometimes	19.5%	7.3%	2.4%	2.4%	4.9%		
	Always	31.7%	2.4%	2.4%				

(Table 34 continued)

		Frequency that you perform this action						
		Never	Once or twice a year	Once a month	Once a fortnight	Once a week	Once a day	Multiple times a day
Team Disruption	Never	9.8%		4.9%				7.3%
	Sometimes	22.0%		4.9%	2.4%	4.9%		2.4%
	Always	26.8%	2.4%	2.4%		4.9%		4.9%
Event Disruption	Never	7.3%	4.9%			2.4%		2.4%
	Sometimes	26.8%	2.4%	4.9%	2.4%	4.9%		2.4%
	Always	22.0%	2.4%	4.9%	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%
Role-Play Disruption	Never	26.8%	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%	4.9%		2.4%
	Sometimes	14.6%	2.4%		2.4%			2.4%
	Always	22.0%	4.9%	2.4%		2.4%	2.4%	2.4%

Note: ‘Never’ column indicates the amount of grievers that have never performed each type of griefing (it has a separate grey scale). The remaining grievers indicated the frequency they performed each type.

Looking at the ‘never’ column first, it can be identified which types of actions the grievers never perform versus whether they believed that action is griefing in the first place. The grievers that never performed spamming were more likely to indicate that spamming was not a form of griefing. There was not much variation between the grievers that performed spamming at various frequencies and whether they thought it was griefing or not (mostly indicating that it sometimes was griefing).

The grievers that never performed ninja looting were more likely to indicate that ninja looting was griefing. However the same is true for grievers that do perform it at nearly all frequencies. It shows that there is recognition of the fact that it is griefing, and so some choose not to engage in this action, while other grievers go ahead and perform ninja looting anyway.

Very few grievers indicating they did not perform player killing / ganking, and for those players, they indicated that ganking is indeed griefing at least some of the time, and possibly always. In contrast, the more often a griever indicated that they performed player killing / ganking the more likely they indicated that it was not griefing. Perhaps they believe that if they developers of the MMORPG allow them to kill other players, then it is simply a part of the game.

Corpse / spawn camping, player blocking, preying on new players, scamming, team disruption, and event disruption all had similar patterns. The grievers that indicated they had never performed these actions were more likely to indicate that these actions were

always a form of grieving. Perhaps they are more reluctant to perform these actions due to recognising them purely as grieving.

Mob camping again was the odd one out, being the only action that the majority of grievers indicated was not a form of grieving, and the most frequent mob campers (multiple times per day) rarely see this action as grieving.

4.3.2.2.3 Witness Perception

As described in the parent section (4.3.2.2), the grieved players were asked, “How often do / did you witness the types of grieving you chose above?” Table 35 outlines their response. This reviews the answers from all the respondents that had witnessed grieving (n=652).

Table 35: Percentage of witnesses (out of n=652) that have witnessed each type of grieving and the frequency of these occurrences

I have witnessed these types of grieving	Frequency						
	Never	Once or twice a year	Once a month	Once a fortnight	Once a week	Once a day	Multiple times a day
Verbal Harassment	7.3%	5.4%	5.8%	10.0%	17.2%	18.7%	35.6%
Spamming	17.4%	3.2%	5.5%	5.8%	15.3%	12.6%	40.2%
Kill Stealing	26.0%	6.1%	13.3%	8.7%	17.9%	15.0%	13.0%
Ninja Looting	23.6%	10.1%	16.7%	13.2%	19.6%	8.4%	8.4%
Player Killing / Ganking	16.9%	6.6%	10.3%	11.5%	17.8%	13.3%	23.6%
Corpse / Spawn Camping	21.8%	9.8%	14.1%	12.4%	17.9%	11.0%	13.0%
Mob Camping	37.4%	7.2%	10.3%	9.8%	16.6%	8.1%	10.6%
Mob Luring / Training	44.1%	12.4%	13.0%	8.9%	11.5%	4.6%	5.5%
Player Blocking	47.5%	9.2%	12.3%	7.7%	10.7%	6.6%	6.0%
Exploiting Loopholes	39.0%	17.8%	12.1%	9.7%	9.2%	5.1%	7.1%
Preying on New Players	20.7%	9.2%	14.3%	12.7%	15.3%	12.6%	15.2%
Scamming	28.4%	12.3%	13.2%	11.5%	14.7%	8.9%	11.0%
Team Disruption	34.4%	9.0%	13.5%	10.6%	15.3%	8.0%	9.2%
Event Disruption	38.7%	14.4%	14.9%	11.2%	10.9%	4.8%	5.1%
Role-Play Disruption	50.5%	14.6%	10.7%	7.1%	7.2%	3.8%	6.1%

Note: ‘Never’ column indicates the amount of witnesses that have never witnessed each type of grieving (it has a separate grey scale). The remaining witnesses indicated the frequency they witnessed each type.

The witnesses to grieving tend to see each of the different types of grieving occurring more often than the frequency with which the grievers indicated performing them. Perhaps they see more actions in-game that appears as grieving to them, but not to the person performing them. As discussed in the literature review, Foo and Koivisto

(2004b) did define a type of player as a greed player; they aren't interested in what others think, and will do what it takes to achieve their goals and acquire in-game virtual wealth. To this player, maybe they don't see themselves as a griefer, but the witnesses and recipients of their actions may. Alternatively, there are some actions that may be witnessed by many players simultaneously; scamming and verbal harassment (through a public chat channel) are good examples of a single incident that many onlookers may observe through their game interface.

The griefing types most widely witnessed at least once per day by respondents were verbal harassment at 54.3%, spamming at 52.8%, and player killing (or ganking) at 36.9%. These types of griefing are very visible to the MMORPG community, as both verbal harassment and spamming are usually done in public chat channels, and a player taking the advantage to gank a player is quite obvious to onlookers (for example a much higher level player annihilating a player low on health).

The next three most frequently witnessed griefing types were new players being preyed upon, corpse and spawn killing, and kill stealing (with 55.8%, 54.6% and 54.3% respectively witnessing these types at least once per day). All of the other types of griefing were witnessed at least daily by less than 50%, but still by a minimum of 24.2% of the respondents. The griefing type at this minimum value was role-play disruption once again.

4.3.2.2.4 Comparison of Associations

The data was compared from the perspective of the heavily grieved, griefers and intersector only (from Figure 8), rather than all participants. Table 36 outlines the data to be compared. The intersector responses had two variations from their point-of-view of being grieved and performing grief. There is a lot of data in this table, with each type of griefing cross-tabulated against the frequency that each of the grieved, griefers and intersector reported them.

Table 36: Percentage of the heavily grieved, grievers and intersector (from Figure 8) that have been associated with each type of grieving and the frequency of these occurrences

I have been associated to these types of grieving	Frequency						
	Never	Once or twice a year	Once a month	Once a fortnight	Once a week	Once a day	Multiple times a day
Verbal Harassment							
Grieved (n=88)	15.9%	8.0%	11.4%	15.9%	18.2%	15.9%	14.8%
Griever (n=41)	26.8%	7.3%	7.3%	9.8%	26.8%	12.2%	9.8%
Inter (grieved, n=12)	8.3%	8.3%	16.7%		16.7%	25.0%	25.0%
Inter (griever, n=12)	33.3%	16.7%	8.3%	16.7%	8.3%	8.3%	8.3%
Spamming							
Grieved	18.3%	4.5%	5.7%	4.5%	12.5%	13.6%	40.9%
Griever	56.1%	4.9%	4.9%	7.3%	17.1%	4.9%	4.9%
Intersector (grieved)	25.0%		8.3%	8.3%	33.3%		25.0%
Intersector (griever)	75.0%	16.7%					8.3%
Kill Stealing							
Grieved	17.0%	5.7%	14.8%	12.5%	26.1%	12.5%	11.4%
Griever	22.0%	9.8%	12.2%	14.6%	17.1%	4.9%	19.5%
Intersector (grieved)	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%		8.3%	25.0%
Intersector (griever)	58.3%	8.3%	8.3%		8.3%		16.7%
Ninja Looting							
Grieved	20.5%	13.6%	15.9%	22.7%	17.0%	5.7%	4.5%
Griever	48.8%	14.6%	4.9%	2.4%	12.2%	4.9%	12.2%
Intersector (grieved)	41.7%		33.3%		8.3%	8.3%	8.3%
Intersector (griever)	75.0%	16.7%					8.3%
Player Killing / Ganking							
Grieved	10.2%	5.7%	10.2%	13.6%	27.3%	15.9%	17.0%
Griever	9.8%	2.4%		7.3%	24.4%	14.6%	41.5%
Intersector (grieved)	8.3%	16.7%		8.3%	8.3%	8.3%	50.0%
Intersector (griever)	8.3%	8.3%	8.3%		8.3%		66.7%
Corpse / Spawn Camping							
Grieved	12.5%	11.4%	17.0%	17.0%	22.7%	14.8%	4.5%
Griever	19.5%	7.3%	2.4%	17.1%	19.5%	14.6%	19.5%
Intersector (grieved)	16.7%	25.0%		8.3%	25.0%	8.3%	16.7%
Intersector (griever)	25.0%	16.7%	8.3%		8.3%	25.0%	16.7%
Mob Camping							
Grieved	37.5%	3.4%	14.8%	11.4%	20.5%	9.1%	3.4%
Griever	36.6%	4.9%	12.2%	9.8%	7.3%	14.6%	14.6%
Intersector (grieved)	50.0%	16.7%		8.3%	25.0%		
Intersector (griever)	83.3%			8.3%			8.3%

Note: 'Never' column indicates the amount of respondents that have never been associated to each type of grieving (it has a separate grey scale). The remaining respondents indicated the frequency they were associated to each type.

(Table 36 continued)		Frequency					
I have been associated to these types of grieving	Never	Once or twice a year	Once a month	Once a fortnight	Once a week	Once a day	Multiple times a day
Mob Luring / Training							
Griefed	46.6%	13.6%	14.8%	10.2%	8.0%	3.4%	3.4%
Griever	61.0%	4.9%	7.3%	7.3%	7.3%	9.8%	2.4%
Intersector (griefed)	75.0%	8.3%		8.3%	8.3%		
Intersector (griever)	83.3%	8.3%			8.3%		
Player Blocking							
Griefed	51.1%	13.6%	15.9%	2.3%	9.1%	4.5%	3.4%
Griever	41.5%	14.6%	7.3%	7.3%	9.8%	9.8%	9.8%
Intersector (griefed)	58.3%	25.0%	8.3%			8.3%	
Intersector (griever)	66.7%	16.7%			8.3%		8.3%
Exploiting Loopholes							
Griefed	37.5%	13.6%	14.8%	10.2%	12.5%	2.3%	9.1%
Griever	63.4%	9.8%	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%	7.3%	12.2%
Intersector (griefed)	25.0%	25.0%	16.7%	16.7%		16.7%	
Intersector (griever)	66.7%	25.0%		8.3%			
Preying on New Players							
Griefed	30.7%	14.8%	5.7%	10.2%	14.8%	13.6%	10.2%
Griever	41.5%	7.3%	4.9%	4.9%	17.1%	14.6%	9.8%
Intersector (griefed)	41.7%	25.0%	8.3%	16.7%			8.3%
Intersector (griever)	50.0%	8.3%	16.7%		8.3%	8.3%	8.3%
Scamming							
Griefed	54.5%	14.8%	9.1%	9.1%	3.4%	3.4%	5.7%
Griever	63.5%	14.6%	9.8%	2.4%	7.3%		2.4%
Intersector (griefed)	50.0%	33.3%	8.3%		8.3%		
Intersector (griever)	100.0%						
Team Disruption							
Griefed	31.8%	11.4%	15.9%	10.2%	13.6%	8.0%	9.1%
Griever	58.5%	2.4%	12.2%	2.4%	9.8%		14.6%
Intersector (griefed)	25.0%	25.0%	8.3%	8.3%	16.7%	16.7%	
Intersector (griever)	75.0%		8.3%		8.3%		8.3%
Event Disruption							
Griefed	45.5%	12.5%	12.5%	8.0%	10.2%	5.7%	5.7%
Griever	56.1%	9.8%	9.8%	4.9%	9.8%	2.4%	7.3%
Intersector (griefed)	41.7%	8.3%	16.7%	8.3%	16.7%	8.3%	
Intersector (griever)	58.3%		16.7%		16.7%		8.3%
Role-Play Disruption							
Griefed	70.5%	5.7%	3.4%	3.4%	6.8%	5.7%	4.5%
Griever	63.4%	9.8%	4.9%	4.9%	7.3%	2.4%	7.3%
Intersector (griefed)	91.7%				8.3%		
Intersector (griever)	58.3%	8.3%	8.3%	8.3%	8.3%	8.3%	

The griefing types that all associations (griefed, grievers and intersector) indicated occurring with similar frequency were mob luring or training, player blocking, exploiting of loopholes, preying on new players, scamming, team disruption, event disruption and role-play disruption. These similarities expressed that role-play disruption occurred the least among all associations, followed by scamming and mob luring or training. More frequently was the griefing types of event disruption, exploiting loopholes, player blocking, team disruption, mob camping, and ninja looting.

The most obvious griefing type agreed by each association as occurring most frequently was player killing (or ganking). However, there is quite a bit of variation among the different associations. 57.1% of the grievers pointed out that they gank at least once a day, compared to 32.9% of the griefed. But the most interesting fact to observe was that the intersector was being ganked more often than others, and in turn delivering this form of griefing upon others. In other words, *because* they have been ganked more often they have felt the need for revenge. This appears to support the retaliatory type of player that the thesis has previously discussed.

It was also interesting to note due to the large difference between associations with regards to spamming, but as described earlier this could be attributed to this type of griefing easily spread far and wide through chat channels that the majority of players are connected to. One griefer in this case can affect many.

The remaining griefing types, verbal harassment, kill stealing, corpse and spawn camping, and preying on new players happen quite frequently on both sides of the griefing, but not as much as player ganking. With all of these actions happening this often, regardless of whether one believes they are griefing or not (as they mostly still have negative connotations), there must be some impact to the players and the developers of the MMORPG. The implications are discussed in an upcoming section (4.4), but first the intensity of the griefing was explored.

4.3.2.3 Intensity of the Different Types of Griefing

The next question that participants answered, once again followed on from the two previous questions. Previously identified was each type of griefing every player had been associated with, followed by the frequency of these occurrences. The next step was to ask respondents the intensity they felt from these occurrences. For this question all participants of dataset two regardless of their association to griefing were asked a refinement of the same question,

- **Griefed:** “What level of intensity would you use to describe this grieving that you have been subjected to?”
- **Griever:** “What level of intensity would you use to describe this grieving that you have performed?”
- **Witness:** “What level of intensity would you use to describe this grieving that you have witnessed?”

The options available to participants were setup with radio-buttons, meaning that they could only select one of the options available per type of grieving. These options relating to the intensity were “low”, “medium”, “high” and “extreme”. Similar to the previous question, only the types of grieving they had selected in the initial question of part five of the survey were visible in the question to select the intensity level.

The levels of intensity refer to the depth of emotion the player feels from the act of grieving experienced. This is subjective, but should provide good indicators on how each type of grieving affects a player emotionally, and which are more extreme than others.

4.3.2.3.1 Griefed Perception

As described in the parent section (4.3.2.3), the griefed players were asked, “What level of intensity would you use to describe this grieving that you have been subjected to?” Table 37 outlines their response. This reviews the answers from all the respondents that had been subjected to grieving (n=642).

Table 37: Percentage of grieved (out of n=642) that have been subjected to each type of grieving and the intensity of these occurrences

I have been subjected to these types of grieving	Never Subjected	Intensity of the grieving subjected to			
		Low	Moderate	High	Extreme
Verbal Harassment	19.0%	24.0%	36.5%	27.1%	12.3%
Spamming	28.4%	27.3%	30.0%	26.8%	15.9%
Kill Stealing	34.2%	40.7%	38.1%	16.2%	5.0%
Ninja Looting	30.6%	40.6%	31.7%	20.5%	7.2%
Player Killing / Ganking	24.4%	31.0%	32.9%	23.9%	12.2%
Corpse / Spawn Camping	29.4%	32.9%	30.9%	23.0%	13.2%
Mob Camping	52.2%	43.8%	40.7%	11.5%	4.0%
Mob Luring / Training	59.9%	55.5%	34.6%	6.5%	3.5%
Player Blocking	59.5%	55.8%	29.9%	10.9%	3.5%
Exploiting Loopholes	53.8%	45.9%	26.2%	17.1%	10.8%
Preying on New Players	51.4%	38.1%	29.2%	18.9%	13.8%
Scamming	64.0%	40.1%	29.3%	17.7%	13.0%
Team Disruption	44.2%	32.4%	33.7%	25.4%	8.4%
Event Disruption	56.1%	42.9%	32.6%	18.0%	6.4%
Role-Play Disruption	78.0%	37.6%	29.0%	21.7%	11.8%

Note: 'Never Subjected' column indicates the amount of grieved players that have never been subjected to each type of grieving (it has a separate grey scale). The remaining grieved indicated the intensity of each type of grieving that they were subjected to.

From the perspective of the grieved the majority of grieving occurring is of low to moderate intensity. This is especially evident among the grieving types termed mob luring or training, player blocking and mob camping.

40.1% of the grieved respondents were subjected to Mob luring or training, and of these, only 3.5% indicated that when it has happened to them it felt extreme, with an additional 6.5% indicating a high intensity. More than half (55.5%) indicated low intensity, an indication that suggests mob luring or training was a minor inconvenience. This in-game action was also rated as the second most likely to be considered by the respondent as not being a form of grieving (section 4.2.2.1, Table 5).

Similarly, player blocking was not rated as a very intense type of grieving. Once again only 3.5% of those grieved in player blocking rated the intensity as extreme, but a slightly higher amount of players rated the intensity as high (10.9%). Still, there were 55.8% of those grieved in this manner that rated the grieving as low intensity. Mob camping was rated as the most likely to be considered by all of the respondents as not being a form of grieving at all (section 4.2.2.1, Table 5), and those subjected to this action also rated the intensity quite low. 4.0% rated it with extreme intensity, 11.5% with high, and the remainder split almost evenly among low and moderate intensity.

There were two types that stood out as the most intense types of griefing from the perspective of those being grieved in that manner. Firstly, spamming was indicated by the grieved as a high (26.8%) to extreme (15.9%) intense type of griefing. It would appear that spamming is causing a lot of frustration to some players. Recently, new MMORPG chat channels are being flooded with textual spam from people trying to illegally trade in-game currency or other non-approved services, which is affecting the functionality of these games. For instance, the chat channel in the game *Archeage* could not even be used by the player base as the spam text filled the entire chat interface (Olivetti, 2014). This type of thing has also occurred a lot in the past as well where players are routinely sent unwanted spam related to illicit services (Duranske, 2008). Now it can be seen through these results that players treat them as fairly extreme types of griefing. The second type of griefing with a high intensity was verbal harassment, with 27.1% those grieved by this type rating the intensity as high and 12.3% as extreme.

There were five types that were rated of still quite high intensity but less than the previous two discussed. They averaged approximately one third of the grieved rating the intensity low, one third moderate and the remainder between high and extreme. They were player killing / ganking, corpse / spawn camping, preying on new players, team disruption, and role-play disruption.

4.3.2.3.2 Griefer Perception

As described in the parent section (4.3.2.3), the grieved players were asked, “What level of intensity would you use to describe this griefing that you have performed?” Table 38 outlines their response. This reviews the answers from all the respondents that had performed griefing (n=431).

Table 38: Percentage of griefers (out of n=431) that have performed each type of griefing and the intensity of their actions

I have performed these types of griefing	Never Performed	Intensity of the griefing performed			
		Low	Moderate	High	Extreme
Verbal Harassment	53.9%	37.7%	39.7%	14.5%	8.0%
Spamming	85.3%	48.3%	32.9%	10.7%	8.1%
Kill Stealing	50.3%	54.7%	26.7%	12.1%	6.5%
Ninja Looting	77.6%	58.0%	21.9%	11.6%	8.5%
Player Killing / Ganking	26.6%	37.4%	29.5%	18.0%	15.1%
Corpse / Spawn Camping	47.4%	36.6%	30.4%	18.4%	14.6%
Mob Camping	67.5%	49.2%	26.5%	16.3%	8.0%
Mob Luring / Training	76.6%	51.5%	29.8%	12.8%	6.0%
Player Blocking	82.8%	51.5%	29.8%	9.4%	9.4%
Exploiting Loopholes	86.0%	55.4%	16.5%	16.5%	11.5%
Preying on New Players	80.0%	48.7%	26.6%	15.1%	9.5%
Scamming	91.9%	51.9%	28.4%	8.6%	11.1%
Team Disruption	84.0%	43.8%	24.4%	21.9%	10.0%
Event Disruption	83.5%	38.2%	32.1%	15.8%	13.9%
Role-Play Disruption	88.5%	42.6%	36.5%	10.4%	10.4%

Note: ‘Never Performed’ column indicates the amount of griefers that have never performed each type of griefing (it has a separate grey scale). The remaining griefers indicated the intensity of each type of griefing they have performed.

There were five types that were rated as quite high intensity types of griefing by those that performed each. One quarter to one third of the griefers rated these five types as either high or extreme intensity. They were:

- Player killing (or ganking) at 18.0% high and 15.1% extreme,
- Corpse and spawn camping at 18.4% high and 14.6% extreme,
- Team disruption at 21.9% high and 10.0% extreme,
- Event disruption, at 15.8% high and 13.9% extreme, and
- Exploiting loopholes at 16.5% high and 11.5% extreme.

The first two, player killing (or ganking) and corpse and spawn camping were decidedly the most intense types the griefers conducted, as there were the least percentage of griefers that rated it as low intensity as well. They were also close in comparison to the intensity the grieved believed for these types of griefing.

It is interesting to note that not many griefers were spammers, and of those that were, a much smaller percentage rated this type of griefing as extreme compared to those that were subjected to spamming. It is quite possible that only a few players are performing spamming of an extreme intensity but are reaching a wide audience. The same could be said (but to a lesser degree) for verbal harassment, where it possibly

reaches more than just the intended recipient, or perhaps has a greater impact on the grieved than is perceived by the griever.

The largest percentage of the grievers see ninja looting, kill stealing, mob luring and training, and player blocking as the griefing types of the lowest intensity. Their thoughts about the intensity of mob luring and training and player blocking relate to the grieved players' perceptions. Ninja looting and kill stealing however were rated as a more intense form of griefing by the grieved than the grievers. It would appear that the grievers don't feel these actions are as much to be concerned about as the grieved.

4.3.2.3.3 Witness Perception

As described in the parent section (4.3.2.3), the grieved players were asked, "What level of intensity would you use to describe this griefing that you have witnessed?"

Table 39 outlines their response. This reviews the answers from all the respondents that had witnessed griefing (n=652).

Table 39: Percentage of witnesses (out of n=652) that have witnessed each type of griefing and the intensity of these occurrences

I have witnessed these types of griefing	Not Witnessed	Intensity of the griefing witnessed			
		Low	Moderate	High	Extreme
Verbal Harassment	7.3%	7.5%	24.0%	37.8%	30.8%
Spamming	17.4%	13.5%	25.3%	33.4%	27.8%
Kill Stealing	26.0%	23.7%	46.1%	19.7%	10.5%
Ninja Looting	23.6%	20.0%	39.0%	24.4%	16.6%
Player Killing / Ganking	16.9%	15.5%	32.8%	31.4%	20.3%
Corpse / Spawn Camping	21.8%	18.3%	32.8%	27.4%	21.5%
Mob Camping	37.4%	30.8%	38.0%	22.0%	9.1%
Mob Luring / Training	44.1%	42.0%	38.4%	13.4%	6.3%
Player Blocking	47.5%	38.5%	36.8%	13.5%	11.1%
Exploiting Loopholes	39.0%	31.5%	30.7%	22.2%	15.6%
Preying on New Players	20.7%	16.8%	34.2%	27.1%	21.8%
Scamming	28.4%	20.5%	36.0%	22.1%	21.4%
Team Disruption	34.4%	26.2%	36.7%	21.9%	15.2%
Event Disruption	38.7%	29.1%	41.3%	18.3%	11.3%
Role-Play Disruption	50.5%	32.5%	34.7%	18.5%	14.3%

Note: 'Not Witnessed' column indicates the amount of respondents that have never witnessed each type of griefing (it has a separate grey scale). The remaining respondents indicated the intensity of each griefing type they had witnessed.

The observations of the witnesses to griefing mirror those of the grieved but with a bump up of the intensity of every single griefing type. Like the grieved, they rated verbal harassment and spamming as the most extreme types of griefing, followed by player killing (or ganking) and corpse and spawn camping. Also similar to the grieved, the

lowest rated types were mob luring and training and player blocking. The main difference is the witnesses are observing increased intensities, especially with verbal harassment, in which more than two thirds (68.6%) of the witnesses to this type rated the intensity as high or extreme. Spamming was a little lower at 61.2%. Perhaps it was less intense than it appeared as the grieved rated it (and other griefing types) lower, but it is still disturbing to see such high numbers across the board from the witnesses.

Perhaps when the respondents recalled griefing they have witnessed, they recalled some of the more intense examples that they have witnessed, versus the grieved indicating the average intensity. Alternatively, it is possible when witnessing an incidence of griefing the witness perceives the event as more intense than it is experienced as by the grieved individual.

4.3.2.3.4 Comparison of Associations

The data was compared from the perspective of the heavy grievers, grieved and intersector only (from Figure 8), rather than all participants. Table 40 outlines their responses. The intersector had two responses from their point-of-view of being grieved and performing grief.

Table 40: Percentage of each association (from Figure 8) that have been associated with each type of grieving and the intensity of these occurrences

I have been associated to these types of grieving	Not Associated	Intensity of grieving			
		Low	Moderate	High	Extreme
Verbal Harassment					
Griefed	15.9%	10.8%	28.4%	29.7%	31.1%
Griever	26.8%	23.3%	36.7%	16.7%	23.3%
Intersector (griefed)	8.3%	9.1%	27.3%	27.3%	36.4%
Intersector (griever)	33.3%	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%
Spamming					
Griefed	18.2%	11.1%	36.1%	29.2%	23.6%
Griever	56.1%	22.2%	44.4%	22.2%	11.1%
Intersector (griefed)	25.0%	22.2%	44.4%	22.2%	11.1%
Intersector (griever)	75.0%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%
Kill Stealing					
Griefed	17.0%	20.5%	47.9%	24.7%	6.8%
Griever	22.0%	34.4%	18.8%	25.0%	21.9%
Intersector (griefed)	16.7%	50.0%	20.0%	20.0%	10.0%
Intersector (griever)	58.3%	40.0%	0.0%	20.0%	40.0%
Ninja Looting					
Griefed	20.5%	21.4%	38.6%	28.6%	11.4%
Griever	48.8%	38.1%	9.5%	28.6%	23.8%
Intersector (griefed)	41.7%	42.9%	0.0%	0.0%	57.1%
Intersector (griever)	75.0%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%
Player Killing / Ganking					
Griefed	10.2%	21.5%	34.2%	21.5%	22.8%
Griever	9.8%	13.5%	18.9%	24.3%	43.2%
Intersector (griefed)	8.3%	9.1%	9.1%	27.3%	54.5%
Intersector (griever)	8.3%	9.1%	9.1%	9.1%	72.7%
Corpse / Spawn Camping					
Griefed	12.5%	24.7%	32.5%	24.7%	18.2%
Griever	19.5%	21.2%	30.3%	18.2%	30.3%
Intersector (griefed)	16.7%	20.0%	30.0%	20.0%	30.0%
Intersector (griever)	25.0%	22.2%	22.2%	11.1%	44.4%
Mob Camping					
Griefed	37.5%	34.5%	49.1%	7.3%	9.1%
Griever	36.6%	26.9%	26.9%	30.8%	15.4%
Intersector (griefed)	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Intersector (griever)	83.3%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%
Mob Luring / Training					
Griefed	46.6%	46.8%	42.6%	2.1%	8.5%
Griever	61.0%	12.5%	37.5%	25.0%	25.0%
Intersector (griefed)	75.0%	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Intersector (griever)	83.3%	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%

(Table 40 continued)		Intensity of grieving			
I have been associated to these types of grieving	Not Associated	Low	Moderate	High	Extreme
Player Blocking					
Griefed	51.1%	48.8%	34.9%	9.3%	7.0%
Griefer	41.5%	33.3%	29.2%	12.5%	25.0%
Intersector (griefed)	58.3%	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Intersector (griefer)	66.7%	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%
Exploiting Loopholes					
Griefed	37.5%	38.2%	21.8%	23.6%	16.4%
Griefer	63.4%	33.3%	6.7%	40.0%	20.0%
Intersector (griefed)	25.0%	44.4%	33.3%	22.2%	0.0%
Intersector (griefer)	66.7%	75.0%	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%
Preying on New Players					
Griefed	30.7%	19.7%	27.9%	31.1%	21.3%
Griefer	41.5%	25.0%	29.2%	25.0%	20.8%
Intersector (griefed)	41.7%	28.6%	14.3%	42.9%	14.3%
Intersector (griefer)	50.0%	50.0%	33.3%	0.0%	16.7%
Scamming					
Griefed	54.5%	25.0%	45.0%	15.0%	15.0%
Griefer	63.4%	46.7%	33.3%	6.7%	13.3%
Intersector (griefed)	50.0%	33.3%	16.7%	16.7%	33.3%
Intersector (griefer)	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Team Disruption					
Griefed	31.8%	26.7%	30.0%	31.7%	11.7%
Griefer	58.5%	29.4%	23.5%	11.8%	35.3%
Intersector (griefed)	25.0%	33.3%	33.3%	11.1%	22.2%
Intersector (griefer)	75.0%	0.0%	0.0%	66.7%	33.3%
Event Disruption					
Griefed	45.5%	33.3%	37.5%	22.9%	6.3%
Griefer	56.1%	22.2%	27.8%	16.7%	33.3%
Intersector (griefed)	41.7%	57.1%	14.3%	0.0%	28.6%
Intersector (griefer)	58.3%	20.0%	20.0%	40.0%	20.0%
Role-Play Disruption					
Griefed	70.5%	26.9%	30.8%	30.8%	11.5%
Griefer	63.4%	20.0%	46.7%	6.7%	26.7%
Intersector (griefed)	91.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Intersector (griefer)	58.3%	40.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%

Note: ‘Not Associated’ column indicates the amount of respondents that have never been associated to each type of grieving (it has a separate grey scale). The remaining respondents indicated the intensity of the grieving to each type they were associated with.

With this table restricting the respondents to just those that are regularly griefed or a regular griefer (or both – intersector) and then only those that were associated to each type of grieving, the numbers for analysis were quite low. There were no clear grieving

types that all associations (griefed, griefers and intersector) indicated occurring with similar intensity. They all had different viewpoints.

The most intense grieving type from those griefed in each style was verbal harassment followed by preying on new players. However, for griefers it was player killing (or ganking) followed by ninja looting. Many of the intersector had been involved in player killing (or ganking) and those players also rated it quite high from both their perspectives as a griefed player and a griefer, even higher than a 'pure' griefer. Taking into consideration that they may be retaliatory griefers, it is interesting to note they rate the ganking they perform as more intense than the ganking they receive. If it is due to taking revenge on another griefer, then they are enacting more intense grieving upon their victim.

In contrast to the entire griefer population (Table 38), the regular griefers of Table 40 rated the intensity of mob luring and training as quite high, however the number of regular griefers that perform this type of grieving was low and could affect the results. Regardless, there can be intense types of mob luring (an example is the infamous case of an extremely dangerous demon lured into a populated city in *World of Warcraft* (Kohler, 2010)), but the majority of the griefed have indicated it doesn't happen to them. The same disparity occurs between griefers and griefed of the grieving type mob camping.

The remaining grieving types have a closer intensity rating between griefer and griefed, with a few outliers from the intersector due to their low numbers which are skewing the data (in mainly team disruption and role-disruption).

4.3.2.4 Impact from the Intensity of Griefing

The previous question was directed at each player's personal experience and the intensity of the grieving they were involved in. The question that followed intended to examine it from perspective of the respondent looking at the 'average player'. In this regard, all participants of dataset two regardless of their association to grieving were asked the same question without any variation:

"At each of the following intensity levels, how much grieving do you think the average player can tolerate before it significantly impacts on their emotional state or in-game behaviour?"

- Low
- Moderate
- High
- Extreme

For each of these intensity levels, the options available to participants were setup with radio-buttons, meaning that they could only select one of the options available per intensity level. These options were “none”, “one incidence”, “a few isolated incidences”, “several isolated incidents”, and “continuous repeated incidences”. Table 41 outlines the responses

Table 41: Percentage of all respondents and of each association (from Figure 8) that indicated how much grief play they think the average player can tolerate before it significantly impacts them

Intensity Levels and Number of Incidences	All n=656	Association			
		Grieved n=88	Griever n=41	Intersec- tor n=12	Average n=141
Low Intensity					
None	6.7%	6.8%	9.8%	8.3%	7.8%
One incidence	6.9%	9.1%	14.6%		9.9%
A few isolated incidents	6.3%	6.8%	9.8%		7.1%
Several isolated incidents	27.7%	26.1%	14.6%	16.7%	22.0%
Continuous repeated incidents	52.4%	51.1%	51.2%	75.0%	53.2%
Moderate Intensity					
None	2.1%	2.3%	4.9%		2.8%
One incidence	5.2%	3.4%	7.3%	8.3%	5.0%
A few isolated incidents	30.2%	33.0%	29.3%	16.7%	30.5%
Several isolated incidents	43.0%	45.5%	29.3%	33.3%	39.7%
Continuous repeated incidents	19.5%	15.9%	29.3%	41.7%	22.0%
High Intensity					
None	3.2%	4.5%	2.4%		3.5%
One incidence	20.7%	18.2%	17.1%	16.7%	17.7%
A few isolated incidents	43.1%	45.5%	29.3%	33.3%	39.7%
Several isolated incidents	25.8%	27.3%	39.0%	25.0%	30.5%
Continuous repeated incidents	7.2%	4.5%	12.2%	25.0%	8.5%
Extreme Intensity					
None	14.5%	21.6%	12.2%	8.3%	17.7%
One incidence	37.0%	29.5%	17.1%	25.0%	25.5%
A few isolated incidents	27.1%	28.4%	36.6%	33.3%	31.2%
Several isolated incidents	7.2%	6.8%	9.8%	8.3%	7.8%
Continuous repeated incidents	14.2%	13.6%	24.4%	25.0%	17.7%

As can be seen, Table 41 shows two sets of data. The first shows the answer to the question above from the perspective of all respondents. The second shows the data

gathered and outlined from the respondents that were given the associations of grieved, griefers and intersector (from Figure 8).

From the perspective of all participants it is quite obvious that as the intensity of the grieving increases, they would expect the grieved player to be able to tolerate less before it significantly impacts on their emotional state or in-game behaviour. Figure 14 shows this clearly that as the intensity becomes more extreme, the expectation is that the player can sustain less incidences of the grieving.

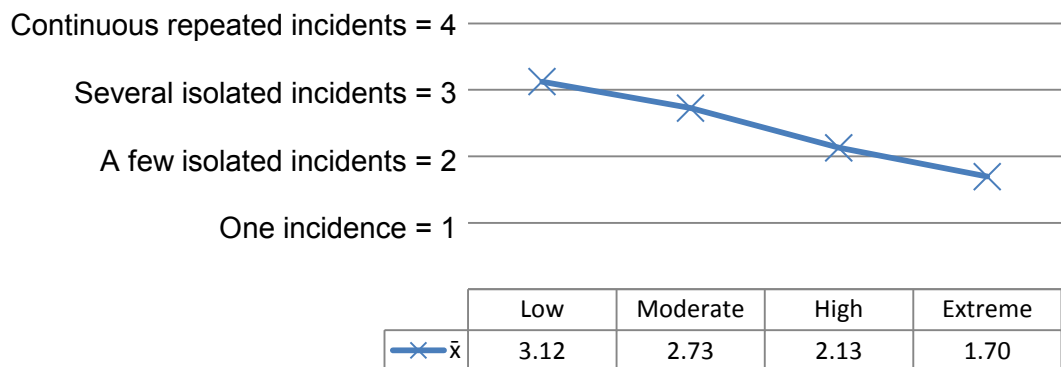


Figure 14: Mean number of incidents a player can tolerate at each intensity level

When comparing all respondents versus just the regularly grieved players, there is not a lot of difference until the extremely intense grieving. At this level of intensity the grieved players are more likely (21.5% of grieved versus 14.5% of all respondents) to indicate that a player cannot tolerate even a single incidence of extremely intense grieving.

The opposite is true of the griefers. At extreme intensity, they are much more likely to suggest that a player can tolerate a few isolated incidences of the grieving (36.6% of griefers versus 28.4% of grieved) or even tolerate continuous repeated incidences (24.4% of griefers versus 13.6% of grieved). That is nearly one quarter of the griefers that grief at least half of their gaming time see grieving of extreme intensity as something that a player can withstand on many occasions without significant impact. Do they believe the extreme intensity will cause only a fleeting feeling among the grieved and they can continue playing unharmed? The next section (4.4) looks into the impact of the grieving to the respondents.

There was one anomaly discovered while analysing Table 41; all groups indicated that the average player could tolerate continuous repeated incidents of extreme intensity more than at high intensity. There is the possibility that the wording in the survey

“continuous repeated” as opposed the previously used “isolated” confused some individuals and skewed the results.

Lastly, the intersector appears to fall somewhere in between the grieved and griefer in their response, but without a larger sample size of intersectors the results do not provide much information.

4.3.3 Summary

The following is a summary of results analysed regarding the magnitude of griefing:

Although not analysed during section 4.3, the demographics in section 4.1 provided initial statistics of the prevalence of griefers and grieved players amongst the respondents.

- In proportion to the amount of each gender playing MMORPGs (~85% are male):
 - Griefers are more likely to be male, but females are not excluded.
 - The grieved players are almost equally male and female.
- Approximately 15% of all players are regularly (at least half of the time) subjected to griefing.
- Approximately 8% of all players regularly (at least half of the time) perform griefing.
- For every griefer that claims to grief at least half of the time they play MMORPGs, there are two grieved that claim they are grieved at least half of the time they play MMORPGs.

The research analysed how often each of the 15 types of actions previously discussed were performed by griefers, and how often the grieved were subjected to each. The results indicate the most frequent and pervasive types of griefing.

- The most widespread and most frequent types of griefing the grieved have been subjected to are:
 - Spamming, with ~21% being exposed multiple times per day, and another 10% daily, and 12% weekly.
 - Verbal harassment, with ~11% daily, and another 12% weekly.
 - Player killing / ganking, with 16% daily, and another 16% weekly.
 - Corpse / spawn camping, with 9% daily, and another 16% weekly.
 - Ninja looting, with 5% daily, and another 10% weekly.
 - Kill stealing, with 12% daily, and another 16% weekly.

- Scamming is not very widespread, with 64% of the grieved never having been exposed and only 6% subjected to scamming on a weekly basis.
- Role-play disruption is the least widespread type of griefing with 78% of the grieved having never been exposed. However among just the players that engage in role-playing activities, nearly two thirds indicated that their events have been disrupted by griefers, and ~19% of this griefing happens daily. In role-playing communities, role-play disruption is as widespread as the other types of griefing among the entire MMORPG population.
- The most widespread and most frequent types of griefing the griefers have performed are:
 - Player killing / ganking - performed at least once by a very high percentage of players. 48.2% of all respondents indicated having engaged in ganking other players on at least one occasion.
 - Verbal harassment, kill stealing and corpse / spawn camping, with one third of all respondents have performed these types of griefing on at least one occasion.
- The action least performed among griefers was spamming.
 - However, many players are exposed to spamming according to the grieved and witnesses, indicating that the few griefers that do spam perform it often and expose many players to their griefing.
- Among the more regular griefers (half of their time in game or more spent griefing) player killing / ganking is the most pervasive type of griefing, followed by corpse / spawn camping, and kill stealing.
- Verbal harassment is also very pervasive, but is more prevalent among the players that grief rarely or occasionally (a smaller percentage, but from a much larger population base)
- Every type of griefing action described has been witnessed by at least half of the respondents at least once, and by at least 5% of the respondents multiple times per day.
- If it is considered how many respondents witness each type of griefing at least daily, it is approximately 10% for the less frequent, up to above 50% for the two most frequent; verbal harassment and spamming.

The research analysed the intensity of the 15 types of actions previously discussed, from the perspective of the grieved, griefers and witnesses. The results indicate the most intense types of griefing.

- Most grieving is more likely to feel of low to moderate intensity to the grieved. Note that this is subjective, and one person's low intensity may be another's moderate.
- The most intense grieving types:
 - According to all of the grieved and also the witnesses of grieving, spamming and verbal harassment were the most intense.
 - If considering just the most regularly grieved players, verbal harassment was still one of the most intense, with being preyed upon as a new player second.
 - According to all of the grievers, player killing / ganking, corpse / spawn camping, team disruption, event disruption, and exploiting loopholes were the most intense types. All of these types had more than one quarter of grievers rating it either high or extreme.
 - If considering just the most regular grievers, the most intense types were player killing / ganking followed by ninja looting.
- The grieving types of lowest intensity:
 - According to the grieved and the witnesses of grieving, mob luring / training, player blocking and mob camping were the least intense.
 - According to the grievers, ninja looting, kill stealing, mob luring / training, and player blocking were the least intense.
- Ninja looting and kill stealing were rated as much more intense for the grieved than they were perceived to be by the grievers.
- As the intensity of grieving becomes more extreme, the expectation was that a player could sustain less incidences of grieving before significant emotional or in-game behavioural impact occurs, although the grievers indicated players would be able to sustain more grieving incidences than the grieved indicated.
- Approximately half of all respondents indicated that a player could only tolerate several isolated incidents of low intensity before implications occur.

4.4 Implications of Griefing

4.4.1 Introduction to Implications

Referring back to section 1.2 and the research questions, the question related to implications asked “What is the impact of griefing from the perspectives of all parties⁷ involved?” Many questions were asked of the respondents in the survey regarding the implications of griefing and this section analysed the responses.

Part six of the survey (Figure 15) was built solely to examine the implications of griefing. The analysis for this section of the thesis used dataset two as the participants that completed the survey (n=656) had answered all questions in part six of the survey related to the implications of griefing.

In contrast to the previous parts of causes (part Four), and magnitude (part Five), participants of the survey were asked different questions depending on their association to griefing (the grieved, grievers, and witnesses) in this part of the survey related to the implications. This is because the focus was more on the grieved and what impact griefing had upon them.

⁷ Those involved with griefing included the griever themselves, but more importantly those that are targeted by acts of griefing.

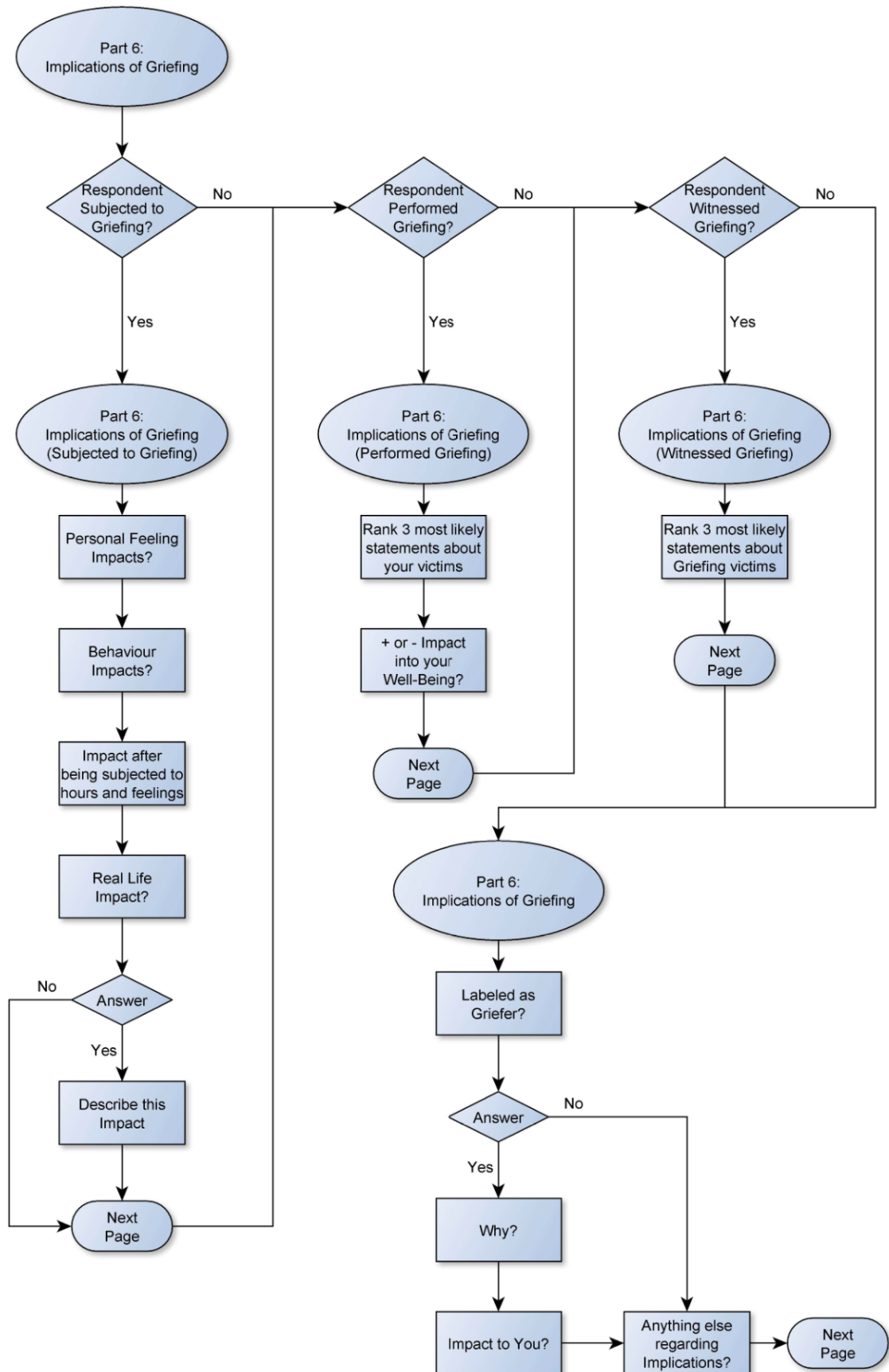


Figure 15: Survey question flow from part six of the survey

4.4.2 Results

4.4.2.1 Impact to the Griefed Players' Well-Being

As acknowledged during the discussion of the significance of this study (section 1.4), the victims of griefing are often ignored (Alemi, 2007), so the questions in this part of the survey focused on these individuals and the implications to them during and after being subjected to griefing.

To discover how a player's well-being was being affected by griefing, a previously established theoretical framework was utilised to structure the questions related to the well-being of a person. This theoretical framework was the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) discussed in the methodology chapter (in section 3.1.3). As a reminder to readers there are three SDT conditions that promote strong forms of motivation. They are Autonomy, Competence and Relatedness, and their definitions in relation to games and virtual worlds (Przybylski et al., 2014; Rigby & Przybylski, 2009) are reproduced below:

1. The need for **Autonomy** is your sense of control; you feel free and have opportunity to perform any activities you desire within the game.
2. The need for **Competence** involves feeling skilled in your chosen tasks, mastering challenges and/or achieving your goals in the game.
3. The need for **Relatedness** is your feeling of being included, close and connected with others in the game community.

Rather than asking the griefed participants directly about their needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness, instead the survey asked them to complete statements (written in plain English) that related to the three components.

4.4.2.1.1 Griefed Perspective of their Post Griefing Emotions

The first survey question related to the griefed players' well-being had six statements and related to how they felt about the game after being griefed:

“After being subjected to griefing, there may have been some impact (positive or negative) to your well-being and the way you felt in-game. Please complete the following statements below about your personal feelings after being subjected to griefing.”

1. My feeling of being in control of my game has...
2. My sense of freedom in-game has...
3. I feel my skill level in the tasks I perform in-game has...
4. My desire to master challenges, and achieve my goals in-game has...
5. My feeling of being socially connected with other players has...
6. My desire to be included in social activities has...

There were three options available to complete each statement. They were:

- Decreased.
- Stayed the same.
- Increased.

Statements one and two relate to the griefed players' autonomy. Statements three and four relate to the griefed players' competence. Statements five and six communicate the griefed players' relatedness. Their responses to each of these statements are outlined in Table 42.

Table 42: Percentage of grieved (on various scales) and how they felt in-game after grieving

Statement and Answer	Amount I have been subjected to grieving					Total n=642
	Very rarely n=180	On occasion n=362	About half the time n=57	Most of the time n=30	All of the time n=13	
My feeling of being in control of my game has...						
Decreased	27.2%	47.0%	52.6%	53.3%	38.5%	42.1%
Stayed the same	71.1%	51.7%	47.4%	40.0%	53.8%	56.2%
Increased	1.7%	1.4%	0.0%	6.7%	7.7%	1.7%
My sense of freedom in-game has...						
Decreased	31.1%	48.6%	59.6%	53.3%	53.8%	45.0%
Stayed the same	65.0%	49.7%	35.1%	43.3%	38.5%	52.2%
Increased	3.9%	1.7%	5.3%	3.3%	7.7%	2.8%
I feel my skill level in the tasks I perform in-game has...						
Decreased	8.9%	19.1%	21.1%	30.0%	38.5%	17.3%
Stayed the same	77.8%	68.2%	61.4%	53.3%	30.8%	68.8%
Increased	13.3%	12.7%	17.5%	16.7%	30.8%	13.9%
My desire to master challenges, and achieve my goals in-game has...						
Decreased	8.3%	18.8%	26.3%	26.7%	38.5%	17.3%
Stayed the same	68.3%	56.6%	40.4%	26.7%	23.1%	56.4%
Increased	23.3%	24.6%	33.3%	46.7%	38.5%	26.3%
My feeling of being socially connected with other players has...						
Decreased	25.0%	42.0%	49.1%	60.0%	53.8%	38.9%
Stayed the same	65.0%	49.7%	43.9%	30.0%	38.5%	52.3%
Increased	10.0%	8.3%	7.0%	10.0%	7.7%	8.7%
My desire to be included in social activities has...						
Decreased	23.9%	37.6%	40.4%	43.3%	53.8%	34.6%
Stayed the same	70.0%	53.9%	54.4%	33.3%	46.2%	57.3%
Increased	6.1%	8.6%	5.3%	23.3%	0.0%	8.1%

Firstly, the statements that refer to a grieved players' autonomy were analysed. The average grieved players' (n=642) feeling of being in control of their game either stayed the same (56.2%) or decreased (42.1%), with a very minor amount saying their feeling of control had increased (1.7%). A similar pattern was identified regarding the grieved players' sense of freedom in the game. Mostly it stayed the same (52.2%) or decreased (45.0%) with a small percentage once again saying their sense of freedom increased (2.8%).

When looking at these two statements from the perspective of the grieved players of differing regularity, it is immediately apparent that those that are very rarely grieved are more likely to retain their feeling of control (71.1% indicated it stayed the same) and their sense of freedom (65.0% indicated it stayed the same) than the other types.

Beyond this there was no clear pattern. In fact the two groups that are grieved the most often showed a small indication that their autonomy increased (up to 7.7% of those grieved all the time, and 6.7% of those grieved most of the time). It is unclear why this is; perhaps they are grieved so often, they know ways to overcome it and gain autonomy?

The statements that refer to a grieved players' competence were analysed next. The average grieved players' (n=642) perception of their skill level in the game mostly stayed the same (68.8%) after being subjected to griefing. The remainder were almost evenly divided between saying that their skill decreased (17.3%), or increased (13.9%), with a slight edge to decreased. When it came to the grieved players' desire to master challenges and achieve their goals, a similar pattern was identified (mostly their desires stayed the same at 56.4%) except that more grieved identified with this need of competence increasing (26.3%) than decreasing (17.3%).

When looking at these two statements from the perspective of the grieved players of differing regularity, there is a clear trend that the more often a player is grieved, the more likely their sense of competence will be dissimilar to before they were grieved. This is especially evident among the more regularly grieved, in which quite a lot of them felt their skill level and desire to master challenges either increased or decreased. It is interesting to see the competence increases of those that are grieved all the time (30.8% for their skill level, and 38.5% for their desire to master challenges), and those that are grieved most of the time (46.7% for their desire to master challenges). After being grieved these percentages of players have increased desire to be competent at the game, possibly to be prepared for the griefers. However there is still a large percentage that indicated their competence has decreased; those that are grieved most of the time indicated decreases of 38.5% for their skill level, and also 38.5% for their desire to master challenges. While those subjected to griefing most of the time indicated 30.0% and 26.7% respectively. At the other end of the scale, these players after being grieved feel less competent at the game and may also feel frustration.

The statements that refer to a grieved players' relatedness were analysed next. The average grieved players' (n=642) feeling of being socially connected either stayed the same (52.3%) or decreased (38.9%), with a small amount saying their social connectedness had increased (8.7%). A very similar pattern was identified regarding the grieved players' desire to be included in social activities. Mostly it stayed the same (57.3%) or decreased (34.6%) with a small percentage indicating their desire for socialising increased (8.1%).

Similar to autonomy, when looking at these two statements from the perspective of the grieved players of differing regularity, it is immediately apparent that those that are very rarely grieved are more likely to retain their initial feeling of social connection (65.0% indicated it stayed the same) and their desire to be included in social activities (70.0% indicated it stayed the same) than the other types. Beyond this, mostly each group's relatedness either stayed the same or decreased. One standout was that 23.3% of those that are grieved most of the time indicated that their desire to be included in social activities increased. This is quite large compared to the rest of the groups. There are arguments for why a player may desire increased or decreased relatedness after they have been grieved. On one side perhaps they are angry or upset and feel the need to avoid people and group activities, while on the other hand maybe they desire strong friendly relationships after a grieving incident. Among all groups they are more likely to fall to the former.

4.4.2.1.2 Grieved Perspective of their Post Griefing Actions

The second survey question related to the grieved players' well-being with six additional statements and was about their behaviour and actions after being grieved:

“After being subjected to grieving, there may have been some impact (positive or negative) which caused you to change your behaviour in-game. Please complete the following statements below about your actions after being subjected to grieving.”

1. My attempts to avoid grievers have...
2. My time spent engaging in activities in-game that I normally enjoy has...
3. My time spent mastering challenges and achieving goals in-game has...
4. My desire to retaliate against the griefer has...
5. My desire to perform grieving on any player in frustration has...
6. My time spent engaging in social activities has...

There were three options available to complete each statement. They were:

- Decreased.
- Stayed the same.
- Increased.

Statements one and two relate to the grieved players' autonomy. Statement three relates to the grieved players' competence. Statement six communicates the grieved players' relatedness. Statement four and five were not related to the components of the SDT, but instead are possible ramifications of the needs of autonomy, competence and

relatedness being unfulfilled due to disruption by the grievers. Their responses to each of these statements are outlined in Table 43.

Table 43: Percentage of grieved (on various scales) and how their in-game behaviour changed after grieving

Statement and Answer	Amount I have been subjected to grieving					Total n=642
	Very rarely n=180	On occasion n=362	About half the time n=57	Most of the time n=30	All of the time n=13	
My attempts to avoid grievers have...						
Decreased	8.9%	4.4%	3.5%	10.0%	0.0%	5.8%
Stayed the same	53.9%	37.6%	21.1%	20.0%	53.8%	40.2%
Increased	37.2%	58.0%	75.4%	70.0%	46.2%	54.0%
My time spent engaging in activities in-game that I normally enjoy has...						
Decreased	13.3%	21.5%	31.6%	30.0%	23.1%	20.6%
Stayed the same	84.4%	74.0%	68.4%	66.7%	53.8%	75.7%
Increased	2.2%	4.4%	0.0%	3.3%	23.1%	3.7%
My time spent mastering challenges and achieving goals in-game has...						
Decreased	5.6%	13.3%	22.8%	23.3%	7.7%	12.3%
Stayed the same	83.3%	75.4%	63.2%	53.3%	69.2%	75.4%
Increased	11.1%	11.3%	14.0%	23.3%	23.1%	12.3%
My desire to retaliate against the griefer has...						
Decreased	10.0%	7.2%	5.3%	13.3%	0.0%	7.9%
Stayed the same	42.2%	23.8%	22.8%	13.3%	30.8%	28.5%
Increased	47.8%	69.1%	71.9%	73.3%	69.2%	63.6%
My desire to perform grieving on any player in frustration has...						
Decreased	34.4%	32.9%	24.6%	23.3%	38.5%	32.2%
Stayed the same	55.6%	48.6%	54.4%	53.3%	46.2%	51.2%
Increased	10.0%	18.5%	21.1%	23.3%	15.4%	16.5%
My time spent engaging in social activities has...						
Decreased	16.7%	25.7%	36.8%	50.0%	38.5%	25.5%
Stayed the same	75.6%	67.4%	54.4%	43.3%	46.2%	67.0%
Increased	7.8%	6.9%	8.8%	6.7%	15.4%	7.5%

Firstly the statements that refer to a grieved players' autonomy were analysed. The first statement was reversed, in that if the grieved indicated that their attempts to avoid grievers had increased, it meant that their autonomy had decreased (and vice versa). This is because in avoiding a player they are effectively preventing themselves from accessing certain areas in the game, therefore losing some autonomy. The average grieved player (n=642) indicated that their attempts to avoid grievers either increased (54.0%) or stayed the same (40.2%), with a small amount saying it had decreased (5.8%). As explained before, this meant their autonomy mostly decreased. The second autonomy related statement suggested a similar trend, with 20.6% indicating their time

spent engaging in activities they enjoy decreased, but the majority said it remained the same (75.7%).

When looking at these two statements from the perspective of the grieved players of differing regularity, once again it is immediately apparent that those that are very rarely grieved are more likely to retain autonomy with 53.9% indicating their attempts to avoid griefers was unchanged, and 84.4% indicating they continued to enjoy in-game activities at the same rate after they had been grieved. As indicated in Table 43, the more often a player was grieved, the more likely their autonomy decreased, with the exception of those grieved all the time. However, they number very few and may not represent accurate data.

The statement that refers to a grieved players' competence was analysed next. There was only one in this case, referring to how much time they spent in-game mastering challenges and achieving personal goals after being subjected to griefing. The average grieved players' (n=642) mostly indicated that the time spent stayed the same (75.4%). The remainder were evenly divided between saying that their time spent decreased or increased (both at 12.3%).

When looking at this statement from the perspective of the grieved players of differing regularity, there is a clear trend once again that the more often a player is grieved, the more likely their need for competence will be dissimilar to before they were grieved. There is a slight discrepancy in this statement from the perspective of those grieved all of the time, but due to their low numbers it could be slightly skewed. Evident among the more regularly grieved of about half the time and most of the time, their time spent achieving their goals either was more likely to increase or decrease rather than remain the same. Once more, there were larger competence increases and decreases among those that are grieved all the time (23.1% indicated an increase and 7.7% a decrease), those that are grieved most of the time (23.3% indicated an increase and the same amount a decrease), and finally those that are grieved half of the time (14.0% indicated an increase and 22.8% a decrease). An increase indicates a desire to become more competent at the game and therefore be more prepared versus griefing, compared to a decrease of competency indicating a loss of self-confidence.

The statement that refers to a grieved players' relatedness was analysed next. The time spent engaging in social activities amongst the grieved after being subjected to griefing was very similar to their desire for socialising discussed earlier. That was the majority of them (67.0%) spent the same amount of time socialising before and after griefing. However, as they were subjected to griefing more often, the respondents were more

likely to select that they spend a decreased amount of time in social engagement after grieving than before. Between 36.8% (those subjected half of the time) and 50.0% (those subjected most of the time) of regularly grieved indicated a decrease in time spent socialising and therefore a decrease in satisfying their need for relatedness.

In regards to the statement about the desire to retaliate against the griever, a large percentage of the grieved indicated their desire to retaliate increased after being subjected to grieving. It appears that the desire to retaliate and perform their own grieving was mostly focused against their perpetrator. This can be seen by the next statement regarding grieving anyone in which only a small percentage indicated their desire to grief anyone had increased after being subjected to grieving themselves. More than half indicated no change in this desire, while one third indicated it had decreased. This adds to the theory that they are more focused on the griever that grieved them than taking out their frustration on a random player.

4.4.2.1.3 Grieved Perspective of their Post Grieving Well-Being

The previous section had many statements relating to the three conditions of the SDT; autonomy, competence and relatedness. The following tables calculate the average change of these conditions among the grieved after being subjected to grieving. For example, the changes of decreased, stayed the same, and increased were averaged among each statement relating to autonomy to obtain the average change to that SDT factor. Table 44 is from the perspective of all grieved (n=656), but Table 45 is only from the perspective of the regularly grieved (n=88) outlined previously in Figure 8 (section 4.1).

Table 44: The impact to the SDT factors of all grieved respondents after being subjected to grieving

Change	Overall Well-Being		
	Autonomy	Competence	Relatedness
Decreased	40.4%	14.8%	31.2%
Stayed the same	56.1%	69.0%	60.9%
Increased	3.5%	16.2%	7.9%

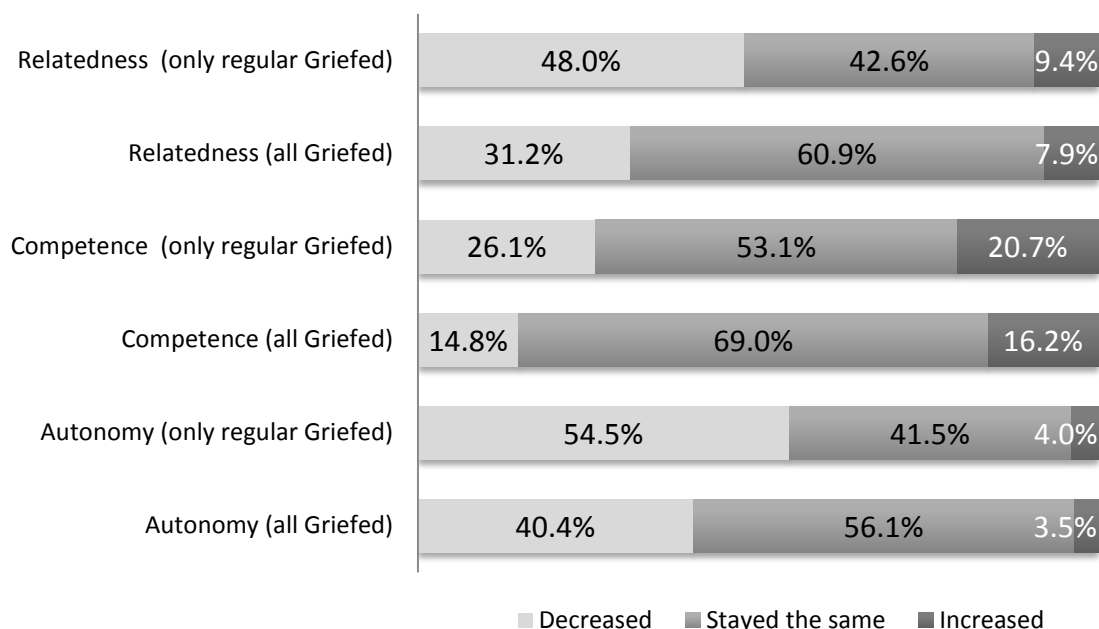
The autonomy of the grieved decreased the most after a grieving incident with 40.5% indicating this, followed by relatedness at 31.2% and lastly competence at 14.7%. At the other end the competence of the grieved was most likely to increase with 16.2% indicating this. Only 7.9% of grieved indicated an increase to their relatedness and just 3.5% to their autonomy.

Table 45: The impact to the SDT factors of the regularly grieved respondents (from Figure 8) after being subjected to grieving

Change	Overall Well-Being		
	Autonomy	Competence	Relatedness
Decreased	54.5%	26.1%	48.0%
Stayed the same	41.5%	53.1%	42.6%
Increased	4.0%	20.7%	9.4%

When reviewing the well-being of the regularly grieved, the same trend as all grieved continued. Their autonomy decreased the most after a grieving incident with 54.5% indicating this, followed by relatedness at 48.0% and lastly competence at 26.1%. The factor most likely to increase was the competence of the regularly grieved, with 20.7% indicating this. Only 9.4% of grieved indicated an increase to their relatedness and just 4.0% to their autonomy.

The well-being of the grieved is more likely to be affected the more often they are grieved. The regularly grieved have an almost fifty-fifty chance of each of the three conditions being affected. Autonomy and relatedness are much more likely to have a negative impact, while competence could go either way, but still slightly in favour of a negative impact. The result is that approximately half of those regularly grieved feel a loss of their autonomy and relatedness, one quarter feel a loss of competence, and about one fifth actually report a gain to competence, as illustrated visually in Figure 16.

**Figure 16: Percentage ratio of all grieved versus regularly grieved and their SDT conditions of well-being**

4.4.2.1.4 Griefed Perspective of the In-Game Impact

The griefed participants were asked to relate their well-being to the types of griefing they selected as being a subject of at the start of part five of the survey. The question was worded with the following sentence in the survey:

“After being subjected to the following types of griefing, what was the impact into your well-being and the way you felt while in the MMORPG?”

The options available to participants were setup with radio-buttons, meaning that they could only select one of the options available per type of griefing. These options relating to the impact to their well-being were “no impact”, “low”, “moderate”, “high” and “extreme”.

Table 46: Impact to the well-being each type of griefing has on the griefed (n=642)

Types of griefing	Not Subjected	In-game impact to well-being				
		None	Low	Mod	High	Extreme
Verbal Harassment	19.0%	27.5%	32.1%	20.2%	13.5%	6.7%
Spamming	28.4%	47.4%	34.4%	12.0%	4.6%	1.7%
Kill Stealing	34.2%	24.5%	40.5%	28.4%	5.0%	1.7%
Ninja Looting	30.6%	15.8%	32.3%	28.5%	17.1%	6.3%
Player Killing / Ganking	24.4%	20.3%	27.4%	27.6%	17.5%	7.2%
Corpse / Spawn Camping	29.4%	16.2%	21.0%	28.9%	19.9%	14.1%
Mob Camping	52.2%	28.0%	39.4%	23.8%	7.2%	1.6%
Mob Luring / Training	59.9%	33.2%	36.9%	19.4%	8.5%	1.9%
Player Blocking	59.5%	32.7%	33.5%	21.9%	7.3%	4.6%
Exploiting Loopholes	53.8%	20.8%	25.3%	23.6%	17.5%	12.8%
Preying on New Players	51.4%	18.0%	23.1%	25.6%	21.8%	11.5%
Scamming	64.0%	22.6%	24.2%	20.8%	18.2%	14.3%
Team Disruption	44.2%	15.7%	32.1%	29.3%	15.1%	7.8%
Event Disruption	56.1%	21.2%	34.4%	27.3%	11.4%	5.7%
Role-Play Disruption	78.0%	19.3%	28.3%	24.1%	20.5%	7.8%

Note: ‘Not subjected’ shows the percentage of griefed that said they were not subjected to that type of griefing. The remaining columns total 100% of the griefers that were subjected.

Firstly, the ‘not subjected’ column was placed to give a good indication to viewers the amount of griefed players that had never been subjected to each type of griefing.

Those that had been subjected to each type were then split in to their impact levels that they had indicated on the survey.

There were four types of griefing that clearly stood out as being the most impactful to the griefed players’ well-being and the way they felt. The four were corpse / spawn camping (with 34.0% indicating a high to extreme impact), preying on new players

(33.3% high to extreme), scamming (32.5% high to extreme) and exploiting loopholes (30.3% high to extreme).

Spamming caused the least impact to those grieved in this manner with 47.4% indicating that it had no impact, and 34.4% just low impact. Previously the analysis indicated that the grieved and witnesses saw spamming as high intensity (section 4.3.2.3). High intensity of low impact suggests that the intensity is related to the frequency of the spamming and not how it impacts the player.

There were a number of other types of griefing that had a relatively low impact, affecting approximately one third of the grieved players' well-being at low to no impact. These were mob luring or training (70.1% indicated low to no impact), mob camping (67.4% indicated low to no impact), player blocking (66.2% indicated low to no impact) and kill stealing (65.0% indicated low to no impact).

The rest of the griefing types fell somewhere in the middle with a variety of response, but the majority of the grieved specified between a low to moderate impact.

4.4.2.1.5 Grieved Perspective of the Real-World Impact

The grieved participants were asked the following question:

“Do you find yourself worrying about in-game griefing incidents you have been subjected to, during your real life everyday activities? If yes, please choose the intensity of your worrying.”

The options available to participants were setup with radio-buttons, meaning that they could only select one of the options available. These options were “no”, “low”, “moderate”, “high” and “extreme”.

Table 47: Percentage of grieved (on various scales) that worry about in-game griefing during real-life everyday activities and the intensity of that worry

	Amount I have been subjected to griefing					Total
	Very rarely	On occasion	About half the time	Most of the time	All of the time	
Intensity of worry	n=180	n=362	n=57	n=30	n=13	n=642
No worry at all	88.3%	79.8%	75.4%	76.7%	53.8%	81.2%
Low	8.3%	14.1%	14.0%	10.0%	23.1%	12.5%
Moderate	2.8%	4.7%	7.0%	10.0%	15.4%	4.8%
High	.6%	1.4%	3.5%	3.3%		1.4%
Extreme					7.7%	.2%

Clearly the more often a player had been subjected to griefing, the more likely they were to worry about griefing incidents during their real-life everyday activities, and with increased intensity. This is particularly apparent among those that are grieved all of the time, the only group that had any indication of extreme intensity. However, as stated previously, this group has a low number of grieved (n=13) and the extreme value represents just one person. Mostly the grieved indicated that they do not worry about the griefing that occurred in-game during their real-life activities. However, there are still reasonable proportions of grieved that do worry, and even at low to moderate intensity it is something to be concerned about. The concern is that a game, something which is supposed to bring enjoyment, can impact negatively upon their emotional state due to griefing even during their normal everyday life.

4.4.2.1.6 Griefer and Witness Perception

Questions regarding the impact on the grieved players' well-being were asked of the griefers and the witnesses of griefing. In this case it is assumed that their answers are their best educated guess, as they could not know the well-being of the individual. The question asked these participants (with slight variations for each type of player,

- **Griefer:** "Your griefing may cause players to react in different ways. Please place these statements about the actions of those you grief, in ranked order from 1 to 3. The first choice is what you consider to be their most likely reaction to your griefing."
- **Witness:** "How do you think a player is most likely to react to being grieved? Please place these statements in ranked order from 1 to 3. The first choice is what you consider to be their most likely reaction to griefing."

The options available to participants were:

- a. They do their best to avoid the griefer in-game.
- b. They appear to logout from the game to avoid the griefer.
- c. They appear unaffected; griefers are just another challenge to them.
- d. They retaliate against the griefer, if they have opportunity.
- e. They return in a group of players to retaliate against the griefer.
- f. They retaliate against any player, with griefing of their own.
- g. They try to defuse the situation with the griefer socially.

Participants had seven options to choose from but only three choices maximum to make. They were instructed however, that they could decide not to choose any, or just one or two if they did not agree with the statements. With a limited amount of choices

participants were forced to focus on those answers they thought were the most applicable.

Table 48: Percentage of all grieved and witnesses that ranked the top three actions they thought the grieved would take after grieving

Actions	Griever Ranks (n=431)				Witness Ranks (n=652)			
	1	2	3	Total	1	2	3	Total
Not ranked	2.3	4.4	9.0	15.8	.8	1.8	5.4	8.0
a. They do their best to avoid the griever in-game.	13.5	11.8	16.2	41.5	39.3	17.3	13.0	69.6
b. They appear to logout from the game to avoid the griever.	5.8	9.0	12.5	27.4	10.7	19.5	16.9	47.1
c. They appear unaffected; griefers are just another challenge to them.	16.7	12.8	11.6	41.1	7.8	8.0	10.9	26.7
d. They retaliate against the griever, if they have opportunity.	38.3	24.6	9.5	72.4	26.4	22.4	16.0	64.7
e. They return in a group of players to retaliate against the griever.	15.1	24.6	16.0	55.7	6.6	17.0	14.3	37.9
f. They retaliate against any player, with grieving of their own	4.4	7.0	12.3	23.7	2.9	8.0	14.3	25.2
g. They try to defuse the situation with the griever socially	3.9	5.8	12.8	22.5	5.5	6.0	9.4	20.9

The griefers (n=431) ranked option d the highest (“They [the grieved] retaliate against the griever, if they have opportunity”). This was the option that the most griefers ranked number one (38.3%) and also the option that appeared the most in their top three ranks (72.4%). The option was clearly ahead of the next three which were options e (“They return in a group of players to retaliate against the griever”) at 55.7% in their top three, option a (“They do their best to avoid the griever in-game”) at 41.5% in their top three, and option c (“They appear unaffected; griefers are just another challenge to them”) at 41.1% in their top three. The least likely option picked by griefers in the top three (22.5% of griefers) and also at rank one (just 3.9% of griefers) was option g (“They try to defuse the situation with the griever socially”).

The witnesses (n=652) indicated some similarities to the griefers regarding their thoughts about the grieved actions. Option d (“They retaliate against the griever, if they have opportunity”) was still quite high, but this time it was second highest as rank one (26.4%) and also the second highest percentage when tallying all three ranks (64.7%). From the witnesses point-of-view, they placed option a as the highest (“They do their best to avoid the griever in-game”) with 39.3% of witnesses ranking it as number one, and a total of 69.6% placing it in their top three. The next two top selections were

option b (“They appear to logout from the game to avoid the griefers”) and option e (“They return in a group of players to retaliate against the griefer”). Once again the lowest ranked option was option g (“They try to defuse the situation with the griefer socially”).

Comparatively the griefers see their victims as most likely to put up a fight and retaliate, mostly singularly, but sometimes with a group of players, followed by possibly avoiding the griefer or just showing no concern at all. The witnesses however indicated the griefed are most likely to avoid their attacker while in-game or just logout from the game for complete avoidance, but they also indicated retaliation was prevalent. Both avoiding strategies are harming a griefed players’ autonomy, the second seeming like it would impact the griefed greatly, with them logging out of the game to avoid repeated griefing. How accurate are the witness and griefers’ assessments of the griefed actions? In 4.4.2.1.2 it was discovered that the griefed players’ feelings of autonomy *is* decreasing the most out of all motivational needs after being subjected to griefing, and in the next section their impact to their desire to play MMORPGs is discussed.

4.4.2.2 Impact to the Griefed Players’ Desire to Play MMORPGs

The griefed participants were asked to relate the amount of hours they played MMORPGs against the types of griefing they selected as being a subject of at the start of part five of the survey. The question was worded with the following sentence in the survey:

“After being subjected to the following types of griefing, what impact did this have on the amount of hours you played MMORPG(s)?”

The options available to participants were setup with radio-buttons, meaning that they could only select one of the options available per type of griefing. These options relating to the impact to their hours playing MMORPGs were “played more”, “no change”, “played less”, “stopped temporarily” and “stopped indefinitely”. Table 49 outlines their responses.

Table 49: Impact on the amount of hours played that griefing has on the grieved (n=642)

Types of griefing	Not Subjected	Played			Stopped	
		More	Same	Less	Temp	Indef
Verbal Harassment	19.0%	2.3%	74.2%	16.9%	6.0%	0.6%
Spamming	28.4%	0.8%	92.9%	5.9%	0.2%	0.2%
Kill Stealing	34.2%	2.0%	85.5%	11.1%	1.2%	0.2%
Ninja Looting	30.6%	2.6%	78.6%	15.5%	2.9%	0.4%
Player Killing / Ganking	24.4%	5.2%	66.1%	18.1%	8.4%	2.1%
Corpse / Spawn Camping	29.4%	2.9%	58.9%	22.1%	14.1%	2.0%
Mob Camping	52.2%	2.6%	81.5%	12.1%	3.3%	0.7%
Mob Luring / Training	59.9%	2.1%	85.8%	8.9%	2.3%	0.8%
Player Blocking	59.5%	1.2%	87.3%	7.7%	3.5%	0.4%
Exploiting Loopholes	53.8%	2.6%	69.8%	17.2%	8.1%	2.4%
Preying on New Players	51.4%	4.2%	64.4%	19.2%	7.1%	5.1%
Scamming	64.0%	1.3%	68.8%	15.6%	12.5%	1.7%
Team Disruption	44.2%	2.0%	73.4%	19.3%	4.7%	0.6%
Event Disruption	56.1%	1.7%	78.1%	15.6%	4.6%	0.0%
Role-Play Disruption	78.0%	2.3%	77.2%	12.0%	5.7%	2.8%

Note: 'Not subjected' shows the percentage of grieved that said they were not subjected to that type of griefing. The remaining columns total 100% of the grievers that were subjected. 'Temp' = temporarily and 'Indef' = indefinitely.

New players are the ones most likely to stop playing a game indefinitely due to players griefing them because they are new, inexperienced and possibly an easy target. 5.1% (13 players) that were grieved in this manner indicated they quit playing because of this. In context, 41.6% (or 265 players) of all grieved players (n=642) indicated they have been grieved because they were new and inexperienced (griefers preying on new players), and 31.4% of these (83 players) indicated that because of this griefing they have played less, stopped temporarily or quit completely. This poses a problem for developers and publishers of MMORPGs as a significant number of new players may cease to play the game as a result of griefing and hence generate no further revenue.

While the most likely type of griefing to cause a player to quit, preying on new players was not the type with the largest negative impact. That was in fact corpse and spawn camping, in which 22.1% of grieved played less, 14.1% stopped temporarily and 2.0% stopped playing indefinitely, or a total of 38.2% negative impact to the time spend playing the game. This type of griefing also affected 70.6% of the grieved that responded to the survey.

Also having a large negative impact to the hours the grieved played was scamming (15.6% played less, 12.5% stopped temporarily, and 1.7% quit), player killing / ganking

(18.1% played less, 8.4% stopped temporarily, and 2.1% quit), and exploiting loopholes (17.2% played less, 8.1% stopped temporarily, and 2.4% quit).

It should be noted that the highest percentage of grieved indicated that they were actually playing more hours on their game after being subjected to player killing / ganking (5.2% of grieved indicated this) or preying on new players (4.2% of grieved indicated this). Similar to their competence being the condition most likely to increase, perhaps the amount they played increased because of their desire to become more competent and overcome griefing. It would be expected that new players have the most to learn and the most competence to gain. Player killing / ganking often happens one versus one and lacking the competence to defeat their attacker may encourage the grieved to increase their skill and competence at the game.

Many of the grieved (71.6%) indicated they had been subjected to spamming, but that it hardly made any impact on the amount of hours they played, negatively impacting just 6.3% of those subjected in this style. Also having very little impact to the time spent in-game was player blocking, mob luring / training, kill stealing and mob camping, the types also least likely to impact their well-being (Table 46).

4.4.2.3 Impact to the Grievers' Well-Being

Grievers were also asked about their well-being related to the three SDT components of autonomy, competence and relatedness. They had the same six statements that the grieved were asked about how they felt in the game, but rather about how they felt after griefing other players.

4.4.2.3.1 Griefer Perspective of their Post Griefing Emotions

Rather than asking the grievers directly about their autonomy, competence and relatedness, the survey asked them to complete statements (written in plain English) that related to the three components. The survey question and statements to complete went as follows:

“After performing griefing upon other players, there may have been some impact (positive or negative) to your well-being and the way you felt in-game. Please complete the statements below about your personal feelings after performing griefing.”

1. My feeling of being in control of my game has...
2. My sense of freedom in-game has...
3. I feel my skill level in the tasks I perform in-game has...
4. My desire to master challenges, and achieve my goals in-game has...

5. My feeling of being socially connected with other players has...
6. My desire to be included in social activities has...

There were three options available to complete each statement. They were:

- Decreased.
- Stayed the same.
- Increased.

Statements one and two relate to the grievers' autonomy. Statements three and four relate to the grievers' competence. Statements five and six communicate the grievers' relatedness. Their responses to each of these statements are outlined in Table 50.

Table 50: Percentage of grievers (on various scales) and how they felt in-game after griefing

Statement and Answer	Amount I have performed griefing					Total n=431
	Very rarely n=263	On occasion n=115	About half the time n=27	Most of the time n=12	All of the time n=14	
My feeling of being in control of my game has...						
Decreased	6.1%	3.5%	0.0%	0.0%	7.1%	4.9%
Stayed the same	66.5%	63.5%	70.4%	41.7%	57.1%	65.0%
Increased	27.4%	33.0%	29.6%	58.3%	35.7%	30.2%
My sense of freedom in-game has...						
Decreased	6.5%	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.6%
Stayed the same	75.3%	70.4%	77.8%	50.0%	64.3%	73.1%
Increased	18.3%	27.0%	22.2%	50.0%	35.7%	22.3%
I feel my skill level in the tasks I perform in-game has...						
Decreased	4.2%	1.7%	0.0%	0.0%	7.1%	3.2%
Stayed the same	84.8%	73.0%	66.7%	50.0%	64.3%	78.9%
Increased	11.0%	25.2%	33.3%	50.0%	28.6%	17.9%
My desire to master challenges, and achieve my goals in-game has...						
Decreased	5.7%	1.7%	11.1%	0.0%	21.4%	5.3%
Stayed the same	84.4%	81.7%	70.4%	66.7%	57.1%	81.4%
Increased	9.9%	16.5%	18.5%	33.3%	21.4%	13.2%
My feeling of being socially connected with other players has...						
Decreased	16.7%	13.0%	3.7%	8.3%	7.1%	14.4%
Stayed the same	77.2%	75.7%	85.2%	58.3%	71.4%	76.6%
Increased	6.1%	11.3%	11.1%	33.3%	21.4%	9.0%
My desire to be included in social activities has...						
Decreased	12.2%	11.3%	0.0%	0.0%	7.1%	10.7%
Stayed the same	82.5%	78.3%	88.9%	58.3%	71.4%	80.7%
Increased	5.3%	10.4%	11.1%	41.7%	21.4%	8.6%

Firstly the statements that refer to a grievers' autonomy were analysed. The average griefer (n=431) feeling of being in control of their game either stayed the same (65.0%) or increased (30.2%), with a very minor amount saying their feeling of control had decreased (4.9%). A similar pattern was identified regarding the grievers' sense of freedom in the game. Mostly it stayed the same (73.1%) with a smaller percentage indicating an increase (22.3%), and once again just a small amount saying their sense of freedom decreased (4.6%). This is directly opposite of what the grieved indicated for these two statements, showing that as the grievers felt more autonomous due to their grieving, the victims lost some autonomy.

When looking at these two statements from the perspective of the grievers of differing regularity, it is immediately apparent that those that very rarely grieve are more likely to continue to feel the same sense of autonomy than those that cause grief more often. As the grieved caused grief more often they were more likely to indicate their sense of autonomy increased.

The statements that refer to a grieved players' competence were analysed next. The average grievers' (n=431) perception of their skill level in the game mostly stayed the same (78.9%) after performing grieving with a lower percentage indicating an increase (17.9%), and a minor amount saying their skill level decreased (3.2%). When referring to the grievers' desire to master challenges and achieve their goals, a very similar pattern was identified (mostly their desires stayed the same at 81.4%), or increased (13.2%), with just a few (5.3%) indicating a decrease.

There was a similar trend among the grievers of differing regularity to the grieved regarding their sense of competence. As they grieved less often, their sense of competence was more likely to remain the same as before. As they grieved more often, there was mainly shifts indicating an increase to their competence. The exception was those that grieved all of the time. The same amount that indicated an increase (21.4%) indicated a decrease to competence. With a small number of players in this category (n=14) it could simply be skewed data, but it could also represent a type of player that gets distracted by causing grief, and loses track of their main objectives. Alternatively, if grieving is indeed their sole goal (as they do indicate they grieve all of the time) perhaps their competence could decrease if their victim has retaliated with their own grieving, or escaped the attacks?

The statements that refer to a grievers' relatedness were analysed next. The average grievers' (n=431) feeling of being socially connected mainly stayed the same (76.6%)

with a small difference of the remaining between decreased (14.4%) and increased (9.0%). A very similar pattern was identified regarding the grievers' desire to be included in social activities. The majority of grievers indicated that it stayed the same (80.7%) with the remaining split between decreased (10.7%) and increased (8.6%).

When looking at these two statements from the perspective of the grievers of differing regularity, there is one main observation to point out. The rare and occasional grievers' relatedness is more likely to decrease than increase, while the more regular grievers' relatedness is much more likely to increase than decrease. This phenomenon indicates that those that cause grief on an occasional basis feel less connected to the community. Is it due to remorse, was it accidental grieving, or something else that affects them this way? The more regular grievers had a higher indication of an increase, suggesting they are comfortable with their grieving and still feel part of the community. It is possible some grievers are part of a grieving community as outlined in the literature review and grieving is a social activity for them.

4.4.2.3.2 Griefer Perspective of their Post Grieving Well-Being

The previous section had statements relating to the three conditions of the SDT; autonomy, competence and relatedness. The following tables calculate the average change of these conditions among the grievers after performing grieving. Table 51 is from the perspective of all grievers (n=431), but Table 52 is only from the perspective of the regular grievers (n=41) outlined previously in Figure 8 (section 4.1).

Table 51: The impact to the SDT factors of all griever respondents after performing grieving

Change	Feelings and Well-Being		
	Autonomy	Competence	Relatedness
Decreased	4.8%	4.3%	12.5%
Stayed the same	69.0%	80.2%	78.7%
Increased	26.2%	15.5%	8.8%

The autonomy of the grievers increased the most after performing grieving with 26.2% indicating this, followed by competence at 15.5% and lastly relatedness at 8.8%. At the other end the relatedness of the grievers was most likely to decrease with 12.5% indicating this. Only 4.8% of grievers indicated a decrease to their autonomy and just 4.3% to their competence. As can be seen, the relatedness of the grievers was more likely to decrease than increase.

Table 52: The impact to the SDT factors of regular griefer respondents (from Figure 8) after performing grieving

Change	Feelings and Well-Being		
	Autonomy	Competence	Relatedness
Decreased	1.2%	6.6%	4.4%
Stayed the same	60.2%	62.5%	72.3%
Increased	38.6%	30.9%	23.3%

When reviewing the well-being of the regular grievers (those that grief about half of the time in-game or more), there are large growths to all three conditions. Their autonomy increased the most after a grieving others with 38.6% indicating this, followed by competence at 30.9% and lastly relatedness at 23.3%. On the other hand, the competence of the regular grievers was most likely to decrease, but still only 6.6% of them indicated this.

Unlike the regularly grieved, the grievers' conditions of motivation are more likely to increase if not remaining as they were before they began grieving. There were hardly any reported decreases of the conditions among the regular grievers. It was only the grievers that reported they do not do grief very often that were more likely to indicate a decrease of the relatedness condition.

On an approximate level, it was discovered that one quarter of the more regular grievers reported a relatedness increase, one third a competence increase, and two fifths an autonomy increase, as illustrated visually in Figure 17. So as expected, grieving has mostly a positive effect on the SDT factors for the grievers, compared to mostly a negative effect on the grieved.

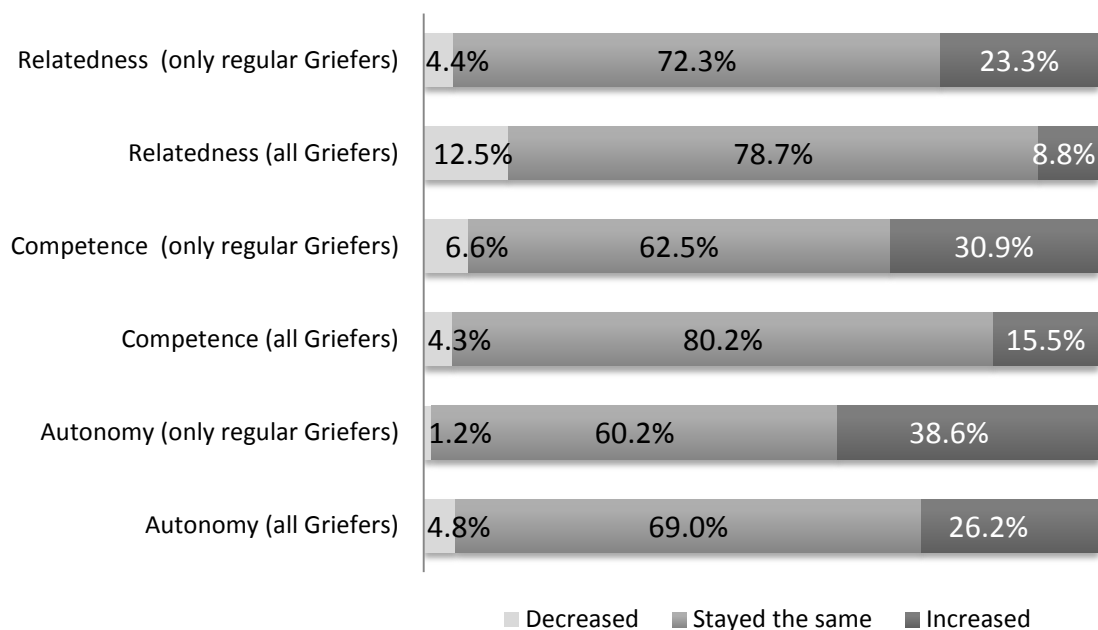


Figure 17: Percentage ratio of all grievers versus regular grievers and their SDT conditions of well-being

4.4.3 Summary

The following is a summary of results analysed regarding the implications of grieving:

As the grieved players had not been the focus of much research in the past, this research placed a greater focus on these players and the consequences that arose from the impact of the grieving they are subjected to. In particular, the research analysed the grieved players' Self-Determination Theory (SDT) conditions of autonomy, competence and relatedness to determine how these conditions that promote the strongest forms of motivation were affected after being subjected to grieving.

- The average grieved player after a grieving incident indicated that their:
 - Autonomy decreased (40.4%) if not remaining similar (56.1%).
 - Competence mostly remained the same (69.0%), with almost equal percentages indicating an increase (16.2%) or decrease (14.8%).
 - Relatedness decreased (31.2%) if not remaining similar (60.9%).
- The heavily grieved player after a grieving incident indicated that their:
 - Autonomy decreased (54.5%) if not remaining similar (41.5%).
 - Competence mostly remained the same (53.1%), with more grieved indicating a decrease (26.1%) than increase (20.7%).

- Relatedness decreased (48.0%) if not remaining similar (42.6%).
- The result is quite a negative impact to the grieved players SDT factors and therefore well-being, with the impact increasing as the player is more heavily grieved.
- Nearly two thirds of the grieved desired retaliation against their griefer, a result of their SDT conditions being thwarted.

SDT conditions aside, the research analysed the 15 types of actions previously discussed to determine the most impactful (and therefore implicative) types of griefing. These were analysed from the perception of the grieved, griefers and witnesses.

- The most impactful types of griefing among the grieved were:
 - Corpse spawn camping (34% indicated high to extreme)
 - Preying on new players (33.3% high to extreme)
 - Scamming (32.5% high to extreme)
 - Exploiting loopholes (30.3% high to extreme)
- The least impactful types of griefing among the grieved were:
 - Spamming (81.8% none to low)
 - Mob luring / training (70.1% none to low)
 - Mob camping (67.4% none to low)
 - Player blocking (66.2% none to low)
 - Kill stealing (65% none to low)
- The griefer's perception of the behaviour of the grieved was that they were most likely to retaliate against their griefing by themselves or with friends. If not retaliation, they thought the grieved were next most likely to avoid them, or just appear unaffected by the griefing.
- The witnesses' perception of the behaviour of the grieved was that they were most likely to avoid the griefer, followed by possible retaliation. If neither of these, they thought the grieved were next most likely to logout of the game to avoid the griefer.

The research asked the grieved whether griefing had a real-life impact in the form of worrying about incidents when outside of the game.

- The more often a grieved player indicated they were subjected to griefing the more likely they were to indicate they worried about the griefing during normal everyday activities outside of the game, and at increased intensities.

The following summarises the analysis of how the 15 previously discussed griefing types affected the grieved players' desire to play MMORPGs after being subjected these types.

- All grieved are most likely to continue playing the MMORPG at the same rate they were prior to being subjected to griefing. However, for those that indicated a change to their desire, it was heavily skewed towards a negative impact to their desire for all types of griefing - and the values were not insubstantial.
- The griefing types that caused the most impact to the desire of the grieved to continue playing the MMORPG was:
 - Being preyed upon as a new player (almost 20% played less, 7.1% stopped temporarily, and 5.1% quit)
 - Scamming (15.6% played less, 12.5% stopped temporarily, and 1.7% quit)
 - Player killing / ganking (18.1% played less, 8.4% stopped temporarily, and 2.1% quit)
 - Exploiting loopholes (17.2% played less, 8.1% stopped temporarily, and 2.4% quit)
- Spamming had the least impact on the desire to play MMORPGs after being subjected to griefing, with only 7.1% of the grieved indicating a change.
- Interestingly, player killing / ganking and preying on new players had the largest effects of increasing the grieved players' desire to play their MMORPG at 5.2% and 4.2% respectively. Perhaps these players have a desire to increase their competence to prevent being preyed upon? Although as noted above, they also had the most negative impact to the grieved players' desire to play.

Lastly, regarding the implications of griefing, the research identified the impact to the grievers' SDT conditions of autonomy, competence and relatedness to determine how these conditions (that promote the strongest forms of motivation) were affected after they perform their griefing.

- The average griefer after performing griefing indicated that their:
 - Autonomy increased (26.2%) if not remaining similar (69.0%).
 - Competence mostly remained the same (80.2%), with more grieved indicating an increase (15.5%) than decrease (4.3%).
 - Relatedness mostly remained the same (78.7%), with slightly more grieved indicating a decrease (12.5%) than increase (8.8%).

- The heavy griefers after performing grieving indicated that their:
 - Autonomy increased (38.6%) if not remaining similar (60.2%).
 - Competence increased (30.9%) if not remaining similar (62.5%).
 - Relatedness increased (23.3%) if not remaining similar (72.3%).
- Very few of the heavy griefers indicated negative impact to their conditions of well-being.

4.5 Observations of Further Research Required

Analysis of the quantitative data provided a substantial amount of results catering to the multiple research sub-questions posed. Additionally, qualitative data was extracted from the answers of the survey's open-ended questions in which many of the survey respondents answered thoroughly. Following on from the survey, this research conducted qualitative interviews with selected individuals to gain thorough and expressive details about outcomes from the survey data. These two distinctly separate phases of quantitative and qualitative constituted the mixed method approach utilised called the Sequential Explanatory Strategy (see section 3.1.1 for a detailed description).

The open-ended survey questions asked the respondents to describe:

- Additional types of grieving that they felt the research may have overlooked;
- what they thought caused a player to grief other players and how they selected their target;
- whether grieving impacted their "real-life" and what that impact was;
- whether they believed they had been incorrectly labelled as a griefer, and the impact that it had.

As indicated, the interviews were conducted after the survey ended. The intention was to strengthen the results of the survey analysis, so the grieved interview participants were initially asked to describe:

- Why they believed they were targeted by a griefer;
- the impact (to their factors of autonomy, competence and relatedness) grieving had on them;
- the type of grieving that had the most impact on them, and why;
- how they reacted to grieving as a new player, and how they would react today.

In addition, the griefer interview participants were initially asked to describe:

- Why they began grieving in the first place, and why they continue to cause grief today;
- how they select their target for grieving;
- the type of grieving that they enjoy the most, and why;
- the impact (to their factors of autonomy, competence and relatedness) causing grief had on them;
- the personal gain (or loss) they obtained from causing grief.

The intersector interview subjects were asked both sets of initial interview questions as they had almost equally performed and been subjected to grieving.

Specifically, these questions were attempting to gain personal responses regarding primarily the causes and impact of grieving, from the point-of-view of the grievers, the grieved and also the intersectors. After using these as a basis, the researcher followed up on any particular areas of interest brought up during the interviews. No interview questions were related to the magnitude of grieving; unlike personal impact and perceived causes of grieving, magnitude is a quantifiable concept, and so was sufficiently addressed in the survey.

All of these questions, both open-ended survey and interviews formed the qualitative portion of the research; phase two of the Sequential Explanatory Strategy. This is presented and analysed in the chapter that follows.

Chapter 5: Qualitative Discussion

During the course of completing the survey, respondents were given the opportunity to express their thoughts in open-ended questions as described in the survey design (section 3.3.1). The space provided for their answers was not restricted by character or word count. Some answers provided by respondents simply addressed the question in a short and succinct one word answer, while other respondents provided multiple paragraphs to explain their thoughts about the topic of the question. Some of these longer responses have been quoted to give a better representation of the personal thoughts of the participants. This chapter will address and discuss the answers provided using the thematic analysis method described in section 3.4, with some selected sample quotes supporting the created themes. The quotes are identified via an ID number associated to each participant, and can be viewed in Appendix F (for open-ended survey data) and Appendix G (for interview transcripts).

This chapter will also review and discuss the interviews that were conducted post-survey. This data will also be addressed using the thematic analysis method. For reference, a table of basic demographics for the interview participants was produced (Table 53). This table shows that all participants selected had an association to grieving of at least half of the time that they play MMORPGs. Their specific associations were a grieved player, griefer, or intersector (the definition provided earlier in the thesis for the intersector was a player that both performed and was subjected to grieving quite regularly). All participants were also quite experienced in the genre, with many years having played MMORPGs. Unfortunately only one female was interviewed, even though multiple women were contacted during this phase.

The goal of this qualitative chapter is to provide more comprehensive and conclusive evidence of and insight into the issues first identified in the quantitative chapter. By using a mixed methods approach called the Sequential Explanatory Strategy (see section 3.1.1), the research will be strengthened with the use of multiple models. While the quantitative goal was to inform about the overarching problem and pervasiveness of grieving, the qualitative goal is to demonstrate a more personal in-depth focus of the causes, magnitude and implications of grieving.

Table 53: Interview participants' demographics

ID	Gender		Age			MMORPG Experience			Amount Subjected to Griefing			Amount Performed Griefing		
	Female	Male	18 to 21	22 to 30	31 and over	2 - 5 years	5 - 10 years	More than 10 years	About half of the time	Most of the time	All of the time	About half of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
Griefed	142	✓		✓		✓					✓			
	253	✓		✓			✓		✓					
	372	✓		✓			✓			✓				
	855	✓		✓			✓				✓			
	1001	✓		✓		✓					✓			
	1126	✓				✓		✓		✓				
Inter.	68	✓		✓			✓		✓			✓		
	1057	✓		✓				✓	✓				✓	
Griever	22	✓		✓				✓						✓
	133	✓		✓			✓				✓			
	229	✓		✓				✓				✓		
	1020	✓		✓			✓				✓			
	1058	✓		✓				✓						✓
	1098	✓			✓		✓				✓			
	1156	✓		✓			✓						✓	
Total	1	14	4	9	2	4	6	5	3	2	3	4	3	2

Note: Inter. refers to the Intersector respondent (those that indicated almost equally that they were subjected to griefing and performed griefing).

5.1 Causes of Griefing

5.1.1 Open-Ended Survey Answer Discussion

5.1.1.1 Additional Types of Griefing

Near the beginning of Chapter Four, the types of actions that previous literature regarded as griefing were introduced (section 4.3.2.1.1). The respondents were asked whether they believed these actions were actually griefing or not. With the option for respondents to disagree with the literatures' assessments of the actions that constitute griefing, they were also given the opportunity to provide additional types of griefing (up to three) not mentioned in the survey.

Some respondents simply noted a one-word answer, while others provided a description and/or an example. The optional survey question was as follows:

“(Optional) Are there any other types of griefing you can identify?”

Note that this question was asked directly following the question on whether the respondents agreed that the actions provided in a list were griefing or not.

There were 174 out of 1028 respondents (16.9%) that answered this question (The amount of 1028 respondents is based on the amount of respondents that finished part three of the survey and therefore had a chance to answer this question). Thirty (2.9%) of these provided three additional types of griefing, 66 (6.4%) provided two additional types, and 174 (16.9%) provided a single additional type of griefing they thought was missing from the survey.

The following word cloud (Figure 18) is provided to demonstrate the amount and frequency of the different keywords in the responses to the question above:

recommended that future research use these updated definitions to better reflect players' interpretations of these forms of grieving.

Team Disruption - (Updated definition) When a player deliberately performs actions detrimental to their team, including but not limited to; friendly fire, wasting key game elements, luring unwanted mobs, colluding with the opposition, non-participation in the group or their role, performing the wrong roles and any other action that reduces the overall effectiveness of the group.

- **AFK (Away-From-Keyboard) group player** - The player is not present at the computer and not participating with the group, effectively reducing the group's overall ability.
- **Poaching** - Convincing players from one group to join another group, affecting the first group's ability to play the game.
- **Incapable or undesired team roles** - Forcing a player to take a role in the group they do not desire, or a player attempting a role that they cannot perform, effectively reducing the group's overall ability. One example by a respondent is quoted below:

"Entering a group Queue, for a role you are not capable of performing. Ex WOW resto druid in tank position" (ID: 435)

- **Intentionally poor performance** - A player in a group intentionally performs poorly or deliberately attacks too many enemies for the group to handle to the group's detriment.

Player Blocking - (Updated definition) A player obstructs another player's escape path to intentionally cause that character's death or confinement. A player may also obstruct another player's view or path from in-game resources (such as items, NPCs and mailboxes), passage to new areas, or claim entire areas as their own, preventing all others.

- **Area control** - A player claims entire areas of the world as their own, by preventing others from using these areas.
- **Passage blocking** - A player blocks players from advancing in the game by blocking passages to new areas.

Mob Training / Luring - (Updated definition) A player pulls or leads a hostile NPC or creature along behind them and attempts to get it to attack another player who does

not desire that engagement. Luring may also involve taunting a hostile enemy to lure it away from another player to disrupt their progress.

- **Mob Disruption** - A player uses built-in taunt mechanics forcing a hostile enemy to attack them instead of the player that was trying to defeat the enemy, disrupting their progress.

Verbal Harassment - (Original definition provided to respondents) Intentional misuse of the chat interface or voice system in order to offend, harass, insult, threaten, or humiliate another player. (This original definition provides the required detail, as the only two responses indicated harassment over voice communications, which is already in the definition.)

Existing types of griefing aside, most of the answers provided could fit into one of three new themes; trolling, an exercise of power, and cheating. Each of these themes was broken up into a number of sub-themes as shown below:

Trolling - Trolling was described briefly earlier in the thesis as an act of intentionally provoking and/or antagonising users in an online environment to create an often desirable, sometimes predictable, outcome for the troll (Thacker & Griffiths, 2012). It is not exclusive to MMORPGs, but any online environment. Thirty three of the respondents mentioned trolling in some form or another during this open-ended question, indicating that it is another type of griefing that happens regularly in MMORPGs. The sub-themes are outlined below.

- **Time Wasting** - One player performs actions in order to waste another player's time. An example provided by a respondent follows:

"[Griefing through] wasting peoples time, make them travel for a trade and troll them when they arrive." (ID: 981)

Another time-wasting example was provided as such:

"Filling a player's in game mailbox with inexpensive or trash items, so that they have to empty it and sort it all out, thus wasting the recipient's time." (ID: 379)

- **Out of Game / Forum Harassment** - Harassment of all types in forums dedicated to an MMORPG. An example provided was to share identities and private information about a player that is known to you. One respondent called this "*Forum PvP*".

- **Baiting / Inciting** - The whole purpose of a 'troll' is to provoke and antagonise. By baiting another player into action, the 'troll' is getting what they want and find it easier to avoid consequences as both parties became involved in the incidence. This type of griefing had many detailed examples. One respondent indicated the griefer would trash talk a player to incite attack, when previously they were safe from all PvP. Another example suggested using baiting to kill or strand players:

“Teleport/Summon stranding/killing - Inviting a player to a group, and either teleporting or summoning them into a situation where they die or will be stuck/lose an extraordinary amount of time escaping.” (ID: 450)

This type of griefing could also be as simple as placing your character on top of a mouse clickable object, and if another player accidentally clicks you instead of the object they start a fight with you.

- **Defamation** - One player does what they need to do in order to ruin another player's reputation. Some examples would be to provide false rumours or imitate a player to destroy their reputation, or intentionally lying about a player's skill level so others will be less inclined to play with them.
- **Discrimination** - Denying social participation to certain types of players based on prejudice. Mentioned types among respondents were sexual, gender, character and racial discrimination.
- **Stalking** - Unwanted and constant shadowing of another player. This was mentioned by twelve respondents but none of them gave any examples.
- **Item and Property Destruction** - Destroying something that another player desires or creates. It could be the creative works in-game of other players or it could be an item that the griefer was supposed to give to another.
- **Animated Offensive Emotes** - Using in-game animations inappropriately to cause offense to other players. An example provided is to use built-in character emotes in a crude and offensive manner, described by one respondent as:

“Playing sexualized avatar animations” (ID: 1080)

This can be done through the animation system in some games resemble the act of sexual intercourse for example.

Exercise of Power - One player exercises their power of position, wealth, or knowledge in order to grief other players. Eighteen of the respondents mentioned

griefers using power to grief in some form during this open-ended question. The sub-themes are outlined below.

- **Using Authority / Rank to Grief** - A player is usually in a position of power within a guild or a group and uses it to enact malicious actions. Examples provided by respondents were to kick other players out of a guild or group (especially when the rest of the group are friends of the instigator), or to exercise authority over lower ranked or newer players in their guild treating them poorly.
- **Economy Artificial Inflation** - Wealthy players may artificially inflate prices of particular items in the virtual world by buying all the instances available at low costs and reselling at extreme prices. An example from a respondent follows:

“Purposefully putting up items for extremely high costs on auction house/general trade network (so as to cause people to pay overly much for items which are not rare as in REALLY rare)” (ID: 290)

- **Game Spoilers** - A player provides unwanted information about lore and events to other players that have not experienced them yet. This could be done through chat channels, private messages or other means.
- **Killing Non-Player Characters (NPCs)** - One player attacks and kills essential NPCs that other players want or need to interact with to progress in the game. NPCs can respawn after time, but until then, the players’ progression may be halted.
- **Stealing Items** - A player uses their position to steal items that do not belong to them. For example if a player has access to a guild’s bank, they could clean it out of all items and then leave the guild. One respondent even describes gaining access to a guild bank through deception:

“Posing as a guild/clan/faction leader who's account was hacked. Making a username appearing as the original guild leader substituting lowercase L for capital I or O for 0 in the username. Many "second in command" high ranking members will believe you and give you your new character a high rank which gives you access to their clan/guild bank or safe house where you steal everything.” (ID: 981)

Cheating - A player cheats by breaking the rules and/or hacking the game mechanics to gain advantage. Fifteen of the respondents mentioned cheating or hacking in some form during this open-ended question. The sub-themes are outlined below.

- **Third Party Software Hacks** - Using third party software not approved by the developer of the MMORPG that has the ability to change the game mechanics in favour of the player using the hacks.
- **Account Hacks / Account Theft** - The player steals the account of another player in order to use it for themselves, or clean out their wealth.
- **Botting / Automated Actions** - The player uses software or programmed macros not approved by the developer of the MMORPG to automate their actions. During automation there is no longer a player behind the keyboard, yet they are still progressing in the game.

While not directly related to the research questions, these themes and sub-themes do give more insight into the types of griefing occurring in MMORPGs. Future research regarding any of the causes, magnitude, and/or implications of griefing should include these themes as additional types of griefing if they want to cover all types that players have experienced. Future research may even include some of these sub-themes, as trolling for example has a large amount of sub-types to consider. This in turn will only add to the results provided here and help to confirm whether or not these additional types of griefing are significant enough to continue to be researched.

5.1.1.2 Targets of Griefing

5.1.1.2.1 Griefed Perception

During part four of the survey, the griefed participants were asked how they thought they were chosen as their griever's target. There were a series of answers to choose from, but they also additionally were given the option to create their own reason in an optional 'Other' category.

Most answers provided were a single sentence, although some provided a few sentences. The survey question for which the griefed could optionally provide their own answer was as follows:

“When griefed, how do think you have been chosen as their target?”

This question's main objective was to gather any additional responses that the survey did not inherently provide regarding the potential targets of griefing and therefore relates to the research question “Why does a player cause grief to other players and how do they select their target?”

There were 91 out of 642 griefed respondents (14.2%) that entered in their own reason (The amount of 642 respondents is based on the amount of griefed from dataset two

described in section 4.1). The following word cloud (Figure 19) is provided to demonstrate the amount and frequency of the different keywords in the responses to the question above:



Figure 19: Word cloud depicting keywords relating to why griefed are targeted from their perspective

The word cloud identifies a few main concepts. If you place a few of the larger (more frequent) words together, you get an idea of the types of responses that the griefed made. For example: “Random target”, “Wrong place, wrong time”, “Competition” and “Disrupt female” to name a few.

Once again a number of codes emerged from the griefed players’ open ended answers. These codes were analysed to construct themes that indicated the griefed players’ perspective of additional reasons they believe contribute to why they are targeted for griefing. Additionally the definitions provided for each type were from a

combination of provided answers, author knowledge of MMORPGs, and online research.

In relation to why a grieved players believes they are chosen as a griefer's target, in general, most of the answers provided could fit into one of five overall themes; Targeting is random, due to competition, due to attitude, discrimination, and/or retaliation. Each of these themes has a number of sub-themes and are described below:

Targeting is Random - The grieved believe they are targeted randomly, with no other reason as a cause. Twenty four of the grieved mentioned griefers targeting randomly in some form during this open-ended question. The sub-themes are outlined below.

- **Entirely random** - As the theme outlines, this code suggests that the grieved player was just in the wrong place at the wrong time, and was randomly targeted for griefing. Quite a few grieved replied that griefers cause grief because they can, as discussed by one respondent:

“The reason people grief is because they can. There is little to no consequences for doing it and therefore they do it to cause annoyance.” (ID: 28)

- **The griefer is bored** - While the grieved are still completely randomly chosen (as above), the griefer is bored of what the game has to offer and resorts to griefing for fun.
- **Accidental griefing** - The griefer is unaware that what they are doing is actually griefing; therefore it is accidental and not specific to anyone in particular.

Competition - The grieved believe the griefer is seeking competition, whether it is unfair or difficult competition they are pursuing depends on the circumstances. Twenty three of the grieved mentioned griefers targeting them due to competition in some form during this open-ended question. The sub-themes are outlined below.

- **Unfair competition** - The griefer seeks vulnerable targets where they hold an advantage. Their target may be a class typically weaker than themselves or a player that doesn't fight back, for example.
- **Test of skill** - The griefer seeks highly skilled and reputable targets to show they are better at the game.

- **Guild / group / clan reputation** - The reputation of certain individuals or the groups they belong to is the cause for griefing. There can be a competitive rivalry between guilds or certain groups and this rivalry promotes the griefing.
- **Friendly banter** - the griefer is attacking a friend as a joke.
- **Competition for computer-controlled enemies or resources** - Due to the finite amount of resources or enemies to kill, the griefer targets a player that is taking what they want.

Due to Attitude - The griefed believe it is some sort of attitude on behalf of either themselves or the griefer that has instigated the griefing attack. Fourteen of the griefed mentioned griefers targeting due to one or the other's attitude in some form during this open-ended question. The sub-themes are outlined below.

- **Authoritative griefing** - The griefer is in a position of power in a group that they use to abuse the lower ranked players.
- **Disliked opinions** - The griefer targets a player because they dislike their opinions or attitude. One respondent answered with:

"[I am targeted] for speaking out against griefing, particularly when well-known players indulge in it." (ID: 101)

- **Jealousy** - The griefer is envious or resentful of something their target owns or has done. One griefed player said:

"[It] urges them to make me a part of their suffering." (ID: 777)

- **Irritation** - The griefer is irritated with a player and so they chose them as a target for griefing.

Discrimination - The griefed believe one of their particular demographics is being discriminated against. Twelve of the griefed mentioned griefers discriminating against particular groups in some form during this open-ended question. The sub-themes are outlined below.

- **Females** - The griefer specifically targets players that are female in real-life. Six females noted this specifically, more than any other types of discrimination. One respondent in particular specified that:

"Men think it's OK to threaten rape and/or make demeaning jokes." (ID: 679)

As conversed in the literature review, Gray (2014) discussed at length the sexism against women (and also racism against players of colour), and it appears it occurs in MMORPGs similar to her study of the Xbox Live platform.

- **Role-players** - The griefer specifically targets players that enjoy role-playing. This has quite clearly been covered under role-play disruption in much of the quantitative analysis, but a specific example was being targeted for role-playing a gay avatar.
- **Minority groups** - Some respondents suggested that being part of a minority group is the cause for being targeted by a griefer. They were however not specific in which minority groups would be targeted.

Retaliation - The grieved believe the griefer is retaliating against their behaviour in-game. Twelve of the grieved mentioned griefers targeting in retaliation to their actions during this open-ended question. The sub-themes are outlined below.

- **Provocation** - The griefer was provoked by a player and so they chose them as a target for griefing. One grieved player suggested they were exploiting the game mechanics and it triggered a reaction from a griefer to griefing them.
- **Overreaction to mistakes** - A player accidentally makes a mistake and the griefer overreacts by subjecting them to griefing.

Non-specifically there were a few responses that did not give an indication of why they thought the griefer targeted them, just that they disliked these people for doing so. There were answers such as:

“They’re a bunch of cocksucking dickwads.” (ID: 697)

And,

“Some players are just dicks.” (ID: 983)

These answers indicated they didn’t really know or consider that there was even a reason at all for the griefing the griefer caused.

Referring back to the research question, “Why does a player cause grief to other players and how do they select their target?”, the themes above provide the insight from the grieved players’ perception and when comparing to the next section (5.1.1.2.2) about the actual griefer reasons for targeting individuals for griefing, their perceptions are considerably accurate. So what can be gained from these answers? First of all the qualitative is to inform upon the quantitative, so for reference this qualitative answer

relates to the quantitative analysis in section 4.2.2.4.1. In the quantitative answers the grieved greatly indicated that they were targeted mostly anonymously, followed by groups targeting them and also targeting because they appeared weak. These three things coincide with the grieved indicating via open-ended answers that they are targeted randomly, by bored players, and for competition. Random targets of a griefer are most likely also anonymous to them. Vulnerable players are their competition, albeit unfair competition. What was unexpected and not identified early on in the survey was targeting a player because of retaliation or due to someone's attitude. These could be quite significant reasons for someone to place a target for griefing on another player, and should be researched further in the future. In particular the theme of retaliation keeps appearing as throughout the course of this study, especially with regard to intersectorors.

Discrimination as a reason for choosing one's griefing target is definitely a problem for the grieved, as was analysed in another survey question's data. In section 4.2.2.5.1 the results showed that all types of demographics are discriminated against to a degree, especially females and younger players (Table 18). The discrimination theme being created from the codes of the thematic analysis further confirms this more, with discrimination against females at the forefront.

5.1.1.2.2 Griefer Perspective

During part four of the survey, the griefers were asked how they chose their targets for griefing. There were a series of answers to choose from, but they also additionally were given the option to create their own reason in an optional 'Other' category.

Most answers provided were a single sentence, although some provided a few sentences and others just a single word to indicate the reason. The survey question that griefers could optionally add their own answer went as follows:

“When griefing, how do you choose your target?”

Unlike the grieved who were giving their best guess as to why they thought they were being targeted, the griefers could provide an exact answer to why they target their chosen mark. Once again this question's main objective was to gather any additional responses that the survey did not inherently provide regarding the potential targets of griefing and therefore relates to the research question “Why does a player cause grief to other players and how do they select their target?”

provided for each type were from a combination of provided answers, author knowledge of MMORPGs, and online research.

In relation to how a griefer indicates they choose their target, In general, most of the answers provided mirrored the grieved players' responses and therefore could fit into the same key themes; Targeting is random, due to competition, due to attitude, discrimination, and/or retaliation. However, some of the codes that were identified for the grieved were not identified for the griefers' responses, and vice versa. This means some created themes (and sub-themes) are identical in definition to the grieved, but have different examples from the griefers perspective, while some sub-themes are entirely new to the griefers. This is outlined below:

Targeting is Random - The griefer targets a player randomly. Sixteen of the griefers mentioned targeting randomly in some form during this open-ended question. The sub-themes are outlined below.

- **Entirely random** - The griefer randomly targeted a player for griefing, with no other reason as a cause. The griefers either indicated it was "random" or anyone was susceptible to their griefing. For example:

"I grief whoever I want to I couldn't care less to who they are." (ID: 17)

- **The griefer is bored** - While those grieved are still completely randomly chosen (as above), the griefer is bored with what the game has to offer and resorts to griefing for fun. One griefer indicated in strong language, that they were:

"BORED AS FUCK OF THE GAME, and cheap kills are lols." (ID: 529)

'Lols' stands for laughing out loud, but can be used in the context of "it is funny".

- **Accidental griefing** - The griefer is unaware that what they are doing is actually griefing; therefore it is accidental and not specific to anyone in particular.

Competition - The griefer is seeking competition, whether it is easy or difficult competition they are pursuing depends on the circumstances. Fifteen of the griefers mentioned targeting a player due to competition in some form during this open-ended question. The sub-themes are outlined below.

- **Unfair competition** - The griefer seeks vulnerable targets where they hold an advantage. One griefer mentioned that they choose someone to grief that is in a position they can exploit.

- **Test of skill** - The griefer seeks highly skilled and reputable targets to show they are better at the game.
- **Guild / group / clan reputation** - The reputation of certain individuals or their affiliation with the groups they dislike is the cause for this griefing. A quote from one griefer was as follows:

“If I see someone that is associated with a guild or individual person that I do not like or that my guild has registered as a KOS (Kill on Sight) I will target them.” (ID: 797)

- **Friendly banter** - The griefer is attacking a friend as a joke or prank.
- **Opposing Factions** - The griefer is targeting players of the opposing faction because the game places them at war. This is one reason that the grieved did not suggest.

Due to Attitude - The griefer targets a player because of their attitude in the game. Eight of the griefers mentioned targeting a player due to their attitude in some form during this open-ended question. The sub-themes are outlined below.

- **Misinterpreted a Joke** - The griefer targets a player because they misinterpreted a joke that was meant to be harmless.
- **Condescending attitude** - The griefer targets a player that believes they are better than everyone else at the game.
- **Irritation** - The griefer is irritated with a player and so they chose them as a target for griefing. One griefer indicated that they play avatars in both factions, and when someone irritates them within one faction, they will hunt them down from their opposing faction avatar.

Discrimination - The griefer discriminates against a certain type of player. Six of the griefers mentioned discriminating against particular groups in some form during this open-ended question. The sub-themes are outlined below.

- **Seemingly unskilled or unintelligent players** - The griefer targets players that they believe to be terrible at the game. A quote from one respondent was as follows:

“Generally I get annoyed by terrible players so I’ll grief them since after years of telling people how to play I’m tired of that route.” (ID: 738)

- **Role-players** - The griefer specifically targets players that enjoy role-playing.

- **Avatar Characteristics** - The griefer specifically targets players of certain characteristics such as an in-game race they dislike.

Retaliation - The griefer has targeted a player as retaliation for their actions. Seven of the griefers mentioned targeting in retaliation during this open-ended question. The sub-themes are outlined below.

- **Provocation** - The griefer was provoked by a player and so they chose them as a target for griefing.
- **Purposeful Mistakes** - A player deliberately makes a mistake to affect their group and so the griefer chooses them as their target, as described by one respondent:

“The target does not communicate with the team and often makes mistakes on purpose to throw the game away/kill everyone/wipe group/etc.” (ID: 712)

- **Paid attack** - The griefer is paid by another player to target someone in particular for griefing. The single example given indicated that the griefer was paid in-game currency to attack someone, like an assassin.
- **Vigilantism** - This griefer selects only other griefers as their targets. In particular one griefer respondent mentioned targeting players that were exploiting loopholes in the game.

Referring back to the research question, “Why does a player cause grief to other players and how do they select their target?” the themes above should provide extremely accurate reasons straight from the griefers’ responses about this topic. As mentioned earlier they mostly mirror the grieved players’ perceptions. The results from the quantitative section 4.2.2.4.2 indicated that the grieved mostly retaliated against other griefers, targeted anonymous victims, or actually targeted players they know and dislike. This agrees with the qualitative discussion above. Anonymous players may be subject of a random or bored player’s attack; a player decides to grief for personal enjoyment and randomly selects an individual that is completely anonymous. Guild or group attacks reflect the targeting of known but disliked players. Possible causes which were not identified in the survey but added here by respondents is that perhaps the player is a friend and is targeted as a joke for friendly competition, and the different attitudes of players causing one player to target another for griefing.

It was observed that the griefers and grieved perceived similar reasons for targeting a player differently. Whereas the grieved may think the griefer is jealous of them and

targets them because of that, the griever perhaps targets them because of their perceived condescending attitude. Alternatively, whereas the grieved may feel that after making a mistake the griever overreacts and targets them, the griever indicated that they consider some mistakes are made on purpose to be detrimental to their team and so they targeted them for griefing in retaliation.

Discrimination as a reason for choosing one's griefing target is definitely a factor of the griever, but unlike the grieved, they specifically stated that characteristics of the avatar rather than the real-life demographics of the player were the reason for targeting them for griefing. This does not indicate there was no demographic related discriminatory griefing, as indicated in 4.2.2.6.1, but that the in-game avatar characteristics were considered as targets for griefing before any player demographics. However, although not expressly mentioned in the interviews with the grievers, the survey results and the grieved interviews identified that discrimination against females was a prevalent activity.

As outlined above in the discrimination theme, role-players and other avatar characteristics were targeted by grievers, and this relates to the quantitative analysis in section 4.2.2.6.2. Guild, race and experience of the player were at the forefront of the players' avatar characteristics as a reason to target those players in that quantitative analysis and it connects perfectly to the sub-themes of discrimination mentioned above therefore confirming and strengthening the analysis.

5.1.2 Interview Discussion

5.1.2.1 Beginning and Continuing to Grief

At the beginning of interviews, all grievers (from Chapter Five, Table 53) were asked how long they had been playing MMORPGs before they began griefing other players, and how many years they had played MMORPGs in total. The nine respondents (two of which were intersector) generally fit into two categories; Those that began griefing almost immediately upon beginning MMORPGs, and those that didn't start griefing until about a year or more after they began playing MMORPGs.

For both types there was no consistent era in MMORPG history or playtime in years of the respondents to suggest any factor influencing the respondents beginning to cause grief.

Following on this line of questioning, the griever interviewees were asked what caused them to begin griefing in the first place. Some grievers had a number of reasons that

they described during their interview, after analysing all of the responses through thematic analysis, the following themes and their sub-themes were constructed:

Personal Gain - The player began grieving due to the personal gain to be had.

- **Entertainment** - The player found enjoyment in disrupting other players' game experience. One quote was as follows:

"The pleasure of knowing you are affecting someone else's gameplay." (ID: 229)

- **Advancement** - The player began grieving in order to advance through the game. One quote was as follows:

"If I need a certain mob kill in order to move ahead in the game I will kill steal without hesitation. Ninja looting is another way of advancing in a game so I will not hesitate to do that either." (ID: 1058)

- **Dominance** - The player began grieving in order to dominate an area for themselves and their guild. One quote was as follows:

"My guild was very PvP oriented, and I promoted a ruthless PvP strategy that was designed to drive most, if not all of my competition from the group PvP areas of the game." (ID: 1057)

Emotional - The player began grieving do to an emotional event within the game.

- **Frustration** - The player began grieving due to frustration with the game and/or players. One quote was as follows:

"I remember the frustration I had, when I was playing Ultima-Online years ago, harsh, not casual-friendly mechanics & people. Probably it drove me in doing such acts in today's games. Which are much more casual player-friendly, which causes players to be less vigilant against such acts in my opinion. (It's more easy scamming today's players.)" (ID: 133)

- **Boredom** - The player began grieving due to boredom with the game.

Authoritative - The player began grieving as a means to hold authority and control over others.

- **Elitism** - The player began grieving in order to discipline teammates that were performing poorly. A close analogy would be the stereotyped drill instructor that is very unforgiving to failure. One quote was as follows:

“When I entered the “competitive scene” I learned that griefing is an efficient way to get people to do their assigned tasks better. When something goes wrong, being nice is not the best way to handle things. It’s what we call “getting people to put their game face on”. When I would fail to complete my task I would get screamed at, threatened, called bad, retarded and other things that are used in MMORPGs and I noticed that it got me to improve. Also I learned the “making an example out of someone” strategy, which is targeting a player and embarrassing him in front of everyone else, so the rest know what’s to be expected if they keep failing at their tasks.” (ID: 1020)

Counter Griefing - The player began griefing as a counter to other griefers.

- **Retaliation** - The player began griefing in retaliation to the disruptive actions of other players. Several quotes regarding retaliation are provided below:

“The game was seriously skewed in favour of those “classes” that i was griefing. People playing those classes were griefers in the first place and, due to this skew, i had developed my character in such a way that it was mostly, if not only, effective against people playing those classes.” (ID: 1098)

“Griefing to me is a reaction from me to others who make certain comments or reactions in game such as boasting, bragging, rude commentary, or in game harassment. I see myself griefing as a way to correct those that are acting in appropriately.” (ID: 1156)

“If I was killed whilst levelling or going about my day-to-day, I’d make sure the other faction paid for my inconvenience.” (ID: 68)

Griefing from these interview subjects was identified to have first begun via the four themes of personal gain, emotional, control and counter griefing. Compared to the reasons the griefer interviewees stated for why they continue to grief today (themes discussed next) the themes are quite narrow with very little sub-themes. These players began to grief because they saw opportunity for gain, their emotions got the better of them, they wanted to control parts of the game, and/or they simply felt the need to retaliate against another player’s actions.

Retaliation was the type of griefing that was mentioned the most as the reason for the player to begin griefing. One of the intersector identified that they grieved other players purely in retaliation. The other intersector began griefing by dominating other players. Only the ‘pure’ griefers began griefing through authoritative means or because of

boredom and/or frustration. Some things changed over time according to the interviewees and even though their reasons for griefing are still very similar today, their responses were much more focused and concise, with some additional sub-themes outlining their reasons.

Personal Gain - The player continued griefing due to the personal gain to be had.

- **Entertainment** - The griefer continued to find enjoyment in disrupting other players' game experience. One quote was as follows:

"It's just fun to mess with people." (ID: 229)

- **Advancement** - The griefer continued griefing in order to advance through the game. One quote was simple but to the point:

"Gaining with less effort." (ID: 133)

Emotional - The player continued griefing due to an emotional related occurrence.

- **Frustration** - The griefer continued griefing due to frustration with the game and/or players.
- **Boredom** - The griefer continued griefing due to boredom with the game. Descriptions provided were identical to why they began griefing.

Control - The player continued griefing as a means to hold authority and control over others.

- **Elitism** - The griefer continued griefing in order to discipline teammates that were performing poorly. One quote was as follows:

"I do believe that griefing is a good method to use when addressing or correcting situations that keep ending in failure. To explain it better in MMORPG terms it's called "being allergic to stupid stuff" or "becoming elitist". Given that probably 99% of the players in a MMORPG are not competitive everything they do will look like a failure to me. I try to stay away from PUGs (party up groups) and go activities [sic] with my groups of players only, but I still find myself playing with them. And it's always the case that one of those players will not be able to perform basic tasks. I will try to correct it, but that always goes wrong and ends up in griefing. Story of my life. Sometimes I wish I had less skill, would probably have more fun." (ID: 1020)

- **Deception** - The griefer stated the deceiving other players factored in to their reason for continuing to grief other players. The quote was as follows:

"...the feeling of outsmarting somebody else." (ID: 133)

Counter Griefing - The player continued griefing as a means to counter other griefers.

- **Retaliation** - The griefer continued griefing in retaliation to the disruptive actions of other players. Descriptions provided were identical to why they began griefing.
- **Vigilantism** - The griefer stated over the years they have switched to a more vigilante style of griefing, only targeting those that are griefing others. The following quotes apply to both vigilantism and entertainment sub-themes:

"I grief those that boast or believe they are better than someone in a game via chatting or in game voice chat. It's a method for me to rather than setting someone to ignore I can get a sense of entertainment from the griefing. Griefing someone who is someone of a bully to others brings me joy."

"I would call it more of a Robin Hood-esque type approach, mostly counter griefing trolls and overly confident players." (ID: 1057)

- **Provocation** - The griefer suggested that on occasions they could be provoked into action. The following quote applies to both provocation and retaliation sub-themes:

"I sometimes do it for the hell of it, but it's mostly a retaliatory action or prompted as such." (ID: 68)

The four themes of personal gain, emotional, control and counter griefing extend what was identified in both the quantitative section of 4.2.2.4 and the qualitative discussion of survey open ended question in section 5.1.1.2. As can be seen, the counter-griefing theme extended in to two more sub-themes of vigilantism and provocation. Multiple interviewees over time developed the desire to punish other griefers and act as a vigilante against griefing. One of these was an intersector, who was obviously tired of griefers and being grieved themselves and so tried to enact their own justice upon them. This intersector was the one that began griefing to dominate an area, but indicated they no longer continued griefing for this reason. The other intersector continued to grief other purely in retaliation. These two intersectors' discussion connects directly to the quantitative statistics in section 4.2.2.4.3 that indicated an

intersector was more likely than a 'pure' griefer to cause griefing in retaliation selecting only griefers as their griefing targets.

Excluding the intersectors, retaliation was not as commonly mentioned as a reason for the 'pure' griefers to continue griefing. Mostly this group of interviewees conducted griefing for the same reasons they began griefing in the first place, although there was a new sub-theme constructed called deception. As some griefers become more confident with their skills in the game and griefing they develop the desire to deceive other players in ways such as scamming.

Referring back to section 5.1.1.2 one of the main reasons for causing grief suggested by open-ended responses was (the theme of) discrimination. Not one of the interviewed griefers suggested they perform griefing for any form of discrimination, unless you count unskilled players as a group that is discriminated against by the elite player that believes (and most likely is) very skilled at the game.

5.1.2.2 Targets of Griefing

5.1.2.2.1 Griefed Perception

During the interviews with the griefed interviewees, they were directly asked the reasons they felt that they (or someone they knew) were targeted for griefing. During multiple other interview questions the griefed also divulged information pertaining to this question. All data relating to the reasons they believed they were targeted for griefing were collated into codes, and constructed into themes using thematic analysis. The themes and their sub-themes (if needed) are described below. Additionally quotes have been provided about the griefed players' thoughts on the subject. This set of themes relates to the question:

"Why I am chosen as the griefer's target?"

Targeting is Random - Similar to the result of the open-ended question (in section 5.1.1.2.1), one of the themes that came from the griefed interview subjects was that they thought they were targeted randomly. A few also mentioned that they had no idea for the reason or cause of why they were subjected to griefing. This would imply that it felt random. Two quotes follow:

"I just could come up with ideas. I really have no clue or real idea of why people have done some things." (ID: 1001)

And,

"I think "targets" are random selected in a majority of the cases." (ID: 372)

Personal Gain - The grieved believe the griefer targeted them as they would gain personally for their actions against the player. One quote was as follows:

"[The griefer gets] Their own sole enjoyment out of provoking someone or possibly to provoke others into becoming distracted and losing the game." (ID: 142)

Due to Attitude - Once again this theme coincides with the survey open-ended response. The grieved believe it is some sort of attitude on behalf of either themselves or the griefer that has instigated the grieving attack

- **Elitism** - Similar to the theme of why a griefer begins and continues to cause grief (section 2.1.2.1), the grieved player indicated they are targeted by skilled players in an authoritative manner in an attempt of disciplinary action against their mistakes or poor performance. Two quotes follow:

"Purposefully creating tension with recently met strangers and guild members, to "toughen them up", see if they can work in a team environment, shrug off minor offences, show a sense of humour and group camaraderie, loyalty to own guild or party's interest, ability to make personal sacrifices without expecting an immediate reward. Rites of passage, probation periods, guild and group votes, leadership politics. Ability to lead, ability to follow or "go home" if you don't fit." (ID: 855)

And,

"It is perhaps because of this desire for competence that griefers are able to troll others by displaying or embracing incompetence." (ID: 253)

- **Opinion** - The grieved suggested that the griefer targets them because they dislike their opinions or attitude. One quote was as follows:

"Basically, whenever someone attempts to be serious about the game or references a serious, "political," or "philosophical" opinion, trolls/griefers are drawn to the resulting debate like moths to a flame. They then proceed to use irrational/logically impermissible arguments or logical fallacies to ridicule whatever is being discussed or the players involved in the discussion. In other

words, whenever someone appears to be “taking the game too seriously,” the griefers are sure to be close by.” (ID: 253)

- **Motivated by advancement and game mechanics** - This is a specific sub-theme that resulted from asking grieved interviewees what they thought about the grieved players being highly motivated by advancement and game mechanics motivational factors (section 4.2.2.2, Table 8). Two quotes follow:

“I think being motivated by these things makes you an easier victim to griefing... if it motivates you, you are more vulnerable probably to griefing.” (ID: 1001)

And,

“People with these values and goals tend to be serious about the game and therefore are more susceptible to griefers, who seek to undermine that seriousness with frivolity and irreverence.” (ID: 253)

Discrimination - The grieved believe one of their particular demographics or avatar characteristics is being discriminated against. The sub-themes are outlined below.

- **Personal Demographics** - Any of the demographics of the grieved player may be subject to discrimination by the griefer. Two quotes follow:

“Uncontrolled griefing, national, racial, ethnic and religious, politically-inspired bigotry...sexual harassment...” (ID: 855)

And,

“We also have an extensive history of in-game griefing, with her getting the additional slap to the face for being a woman (gender stereotyping and abuse when found out, otherwise the emotional strain of not being allowed to trust people with own name and gender in fear of losing them.” (ID: 855)

- **Avatar Characteristics** - Any of the characteristics of their avatar they play in-game may be subject to discrimination by the griefer. Two quotes follow:

“I had an Australian flag on my tank and an American player said racist remarks trying to provoke me into an argument during a heated ingame tank battle that required more attention.” (ID: 142)

And,

“Dying armor in a way that doesn’t really fit in the game world (for example bright pink) can incite grievers, I think.” (ID: 372)

Retaliation - The grieved suggested that the griefer could be retaliating against a player or the game. Two quotes follow:

“Reminds me a bit of “Persecutor - Rescuer - Victim” triangle, parallels definitely can be made (that one also shows in very graphic way the process of moral degeneracy, victims turning persecutors when subjected with systemic abuse to get anything done in the game.” (ID: 855)

And,

“In retrospect, I know that grievers target those who protest and complain about their activities the loudest.” (ID: 1126)

Most of these themes relate to the themes that were constructed in section 5.1.1.2.1, which analysed the survey open-ended answers regarding why the grieved thought they were targeted. Out of the themes above regarding why the grieved interviewees thought they were targeted; targeting is random, due to attitude, discrimination, and retaliation were all also themes amongst the grieved survey respondents. With such a close relationship, the interviews supported the previous data.

The new main theme that was constructed from the interviewees’ discussions was ‘personal gain’, and is in place of the survey respondents’ theme ‘competition’. This gives the impression that the respondents that were interviewed saw their grievers competing (perhaps unfairly) only if they stood to gain something from it.

A sub-theme of ‘attitude’ was ‘motivated by advancement and game mechanics’, and as stated these motivations were directly discussed with grieved interview subjects to gather their thoughts about and inform upon the quantitative results from section 4.2.2.2. It was suggested that being motivated by these factors could in turn make you more vulnerable to griefing as grievers find ways to manipulate game mechanics, and block players from advancing.

The theme of discrimination discusses different types of discrimination that a player can experience, and in the quantitative analysis of section 4.2.2.5 it was identified that the female gender, the 16 to 17 year olds, and gay/lesbian players were more likely to be targeted than other groups due to their particular demographic. One interview respondent identified the misogynistic attitude of grievers. This player describes in their

interview many incidences in which his female friend was subjected to griefing and treated poorly the moment player's found out she was indeed female in real-life. The other demographics were not clearly defined beyond a passing mention by interview subjects; however discrimination was definitely a factor for the grieved.

In section 4.2.2.6.3, the result of whether a player's avatar characteristics were the target of griefing was analysed. The grieved specified that their avatar's name, race, guild, or level was most likely the cause of being targeted. Appearance was not a high rated avatar characteristic for griefing targeting, although it was suggested by multiple interview subjects that ridiculous, silly or mismatched looking armour and/or colours could be a cause for players being grieved.

Retaliation once again appeared as a major theme, with one grieved player suggesting almost exactly what the griefers had described in section 5.1.2.1. That is that a player that was once the grieved has eventually gotten fed up and turned the tables becoming the griefer for retaliation.

5.1.2.2.2 Griefer Perspective

During the interviews with the griefer interviewees, it was asked directly how they selected their target for griefing. During multiple other interview questions the griefers also divulged information pertaining to this question. All data relating to their target selections were collated into codes, and constructed into themes using thematic analysis. The themes and their sub-themes (if needed) are described below.

Additionally quotes have been provided about the griefers' thoughts on the subject.

This set of themes relates to the question:

"How do I choose my griefing target?"

Targeting is Random - The griefer simply targets a player randomly. The sub-themes are outlined below.

- **Entirely random** - The griefer randomly targeted a player for griefing, with no other reason as a cause. Two quotes follow:

"Depends of the method of griefing, [some methods] can be totally random." (ID: 133)

And,

"Whoever is near me. I really don't make it personal." (ID: 1058)

- **The griefer is bored** - While the grieved are still completely randomly chosen (as above), the griefer is bored of what the game has to offer and resorts to griefing for fun.

Competition - The motivational factor of competition was analysed in the quantitative section of 4.2.2.2, and the results shown that griefers highly valued competition. The griefer interviewees were specifically asked for their thoughts about the competition motivational factor. Four indicated that it was indeed related to their reason for targeting someone, while two were directly opposed to this idea. The following is a description of this type of targeting: the griefer is seeking competition, whether it is easy or difficult competition they are pursuing depends on the circumstances. The sub-themes are outlined below.

- **Unfair competition** - The griefer seeks vulnerable targets where they hold an advantage. One quote was as follows:

"I do enjoy PvPing with other players so I tend to pick fights/kill players that don't want to PvP. Preying on new players is fun when I get bored." (ID: 1058)

- **Test of skill** - The griefer seeks highly skilled and reputable targets to show they are better at the game. One respondents quote follows:

"1uping someone else is always fun no matter what the situation friend or foe. Being king of the kill always strong motivation even if others consider it griefing." (ID: 22)

- **Those opposed to competition as a reason for causing grief** - Two quotes follow:

"Competition, and skill, are large factors for me in playing games, but not in griefing, you can't prove that you are skilled by killing or griefing players who stand no chance at fighting you, its more of a power thing, making the other player feel helpless against you." (ID: 229)

And,

"I disagree [with competition as a griefing cause] since i believe that griefing is mostly a matter of finding or creating a set of circumstances that grant to the griefer an overwhelming advantage and make the receiver feel impotent." (ID: 1098)

Personal Gain - The griefer targets a player as they would gain personally for their actions against the player. A partial quote relating to personal gain was as follows:

“...or if I have a considerable amount to gain by the griefing.” (ID: 1057)

Due to Attitude - The griefer targets a player because of their attitude in the game. The sub-themes are outlined below.

- **Frustration** - The griefer is frustrated with a player and so they chose them as a target for griefing. One quote was as follows:

“I target the people that grief me by constantly creating frustrating situations or people how's attitudes I don't like. I never picked on a random person for no reason.” (ID: 1020)

- **Irritation** - The griefer is irritated with a player and so they chose them as a target for griefing. Two quotes follow:

“I also hate what we call “drama queens”, people that have to make everything about themselves and throw a temper tantrum every time something doesn't go their way or that create dramatic situations just to attract attention. I will always call them out and grief them whenever the situation allows it, in any way possible.” (ID: 1020)

And,

“[I will target them] Normally by their behaviour (in chat or game related activities).” (ID: 1057)

Discrimination - The griefer discriminates against a certain type of player. The sub-themes are outlined below.

- **Role-players** - The griefer specifically targets players that enjoy role-playing. Two quotes from the same griefer follow:

“RPing is a strong motivation as [it] lets me play a character of my own design and many RPer's will not ignore you as long as you stay ICly [in character] so in a sense it can be fun finding masochists and tormenting them in RP and just general throwing a monkey wrench into peoples sets and watching them try to react to my trolling. Corpse camping may be fun but short-lived and RP griefing generally yields a much longer life and therefore entertainment.” (ID: 22)

And,

“Generally I RP evil characters, mainly because most people don’t and its fun making people hurt ICly [in character] preferably after befriending and if they are OOCly [out of character] its because they can’t handle it ICly [in character] and probably masochists in denial.” (ID: 22)

- **Rival Guild** - The rivalry with another guild is the cause for this grieving. One quote was as follows:

“If they are in a rival guild then I will grief them until either they leave the area or I get outnumbered and die.” (ID: 1058)

Retaliation - The griever has targeted a player as retaliation for their actions. The sub-themes are outlined below.

- **Provocation** - The griever was provoked by a player and so they chose them as a target for grieving. Two quotes follow:

“Random most times, unless someone provokes me or pisses me off then I target them.” (ID: 229)

And,

“Often times if I can find someone that has done it to me, I will do it to them. I’m not a proponent of an eye for an eye, more like an eye for a limb... If people decide to inconvenience me then I’ll go out of my way to ruin their gaming session by killing them, corpse camping and the like.” (ID: 68)

- **Vigilantism** - This griever selects only other griefers as their targets. Two quotes follow:

“They [my targets] are people that show to be griefers themselves or that take advantage of game biases/ exploits [sic] or that use groups to stop people from playing.” (ID: 1098)

And,

“[My] grieving is a reaction to someone who is doing it themselves. I see it as a reaction to those that are bullies in game.” (ID: 1156)

Deception - The griever selects someone after befriending them and gaining trust. One quote was as follows:

“After spending some in-game time with the player & decide it as a possible-target.”

As was the case for the grieved, these themes are very similar to the themes that were constructed in section 5.1.1.2.2. That section analysed the survey open-ended answers regarding what factors related to how the griefer selected a target for griefing. The themes called targeting is random, competition, due to attitude, discrimination, and retaliation were all present after construction of themes from the griefer survey data.

New themes that emerged for how a griefer selects their target were ‘personal gain’ and ‘deception’. Unlike the grieved interviewees that sometimes perceived their griefers as causing grief for personal gain rather than for competition, the griefer interviewees equally demonstrated that they targeted players for both reasons. Some griefers are purely in it for their own personal gain, some cause grief to satisfy their competitive nature with not much to gain except perhaps satisfaction of their skills, while yet others believe that both are a factor.

Similar to the grieved interviewees line of questioning regarding motivational factors, the griefers were also asked about the motivational factor of ‘competition’ to gather their thoughts about and inform upon the quantitative results from section 4.2.2.2. It was discovered that there was definitely a bias towards being motivated by competitive features of an MMORPG by griefers as it validated their skill, and therefore has been identified as not only a highly motivating factor for griefers, but also a good reason for them to choose their targets for griefing competitively.

The theme of discrimination appears once again, however none of the interview subjects discussed any demographic related discrimination during their interview process, in this case of the griefers the most common discussion revolved around targeting role-players or rival guilds / clans. Some of the griefers actually role-played a character themselves, but chose an evil identity. The griefer felt genuine role-players should stay in character even when they (the griefer) were maliciously acting against them (their target), as they (the griefer) were ‘just’ role-playing their evil character. According to this studies demographics (section 4.1) and motivational factors (section 4.2.2.2) role-playing was preferred by the minority of this respondent dataset and also was the lowest motivational factor of players to play MMORPGs. Perhaps with a pool of players dedicated to role-playing, the results would show more reasons why they are targeted for griefing.

Some of the griefer interviewees noted a form of retaliation, split between a vigilante style of griefing targeting those the griefer felt deserved it because of their actions against other players, and simple provocation. Reviewing the results from the quantitative section 4.2.2.4.2 indicated that the grieved mostly chose their targets through retaliation against other griefers, targeting of anonymous victims, or actually targeting players they know and dislike. This agrees with the qualitative discussion above, much as it did during the analysis of the open-ended question relating to targets of griefing.

5.1.2.3 Griefers' Most Enjoyable Type of Griefing

The interviews with the chosen griefers identified their most enjoyable type of griefing along with their reasons why they found it enjoyable. The purpose in identifying this was because their most enjoyable experiences of griefing gave strong indications of why they perform this type of griefing and also their reason for causing more grief in this manner. After analysing all of the griefer interviews, these themes (in these cases, types) of griefing were identified as the most enjoyable:

- **Corpse / spawn camping** - This was by far the most enjoyable type of griefing among the griefers that were interviewed, with three griefers and one intersector citing it. The initial description of this type given to respondents was "A player repeatedly kills the same individual multiple times, remaining in a location where the victim will respawn or resurrect (usually in a weakened state) and cannot escape the attack." The following quotes give some insight into why they perform this type of griefing:

"The only type of griefing I enjoy is camping someone in PvP and ruining his experience." (ID: 1020)

"Spawncamping exploiters or dead members of group griefers." (ID: 1098)

"A second type of griefing that I can enjoy is if someone is bullying other people or saying rude or racist remarks my griefing would then pursue with continually focusing killing that one person. If a resurrection pad is nearby I will continue to focus and kill that person in game until they log off the game or they leave the zone. This is the most intense type of griefing I have done and have only done it in extreme cases when someone is really vocal and disruptive in a game." (ID: 1156)

“Corpse camping is a good one. I play a Death Knight which has an ability to pull enemies closer to my attack range when they’re at a distance, i.e. escaping. It always brings a smile to my face when I imagine them thinking they’ve gotten away, only to be pulled back and find themselves at square one wondering why the hell they bothered annoying me.” (ID: 68)

- **Player killing / ganking** - This was identified by one griever and one intersector as the most enjoyable type of griefing. The initial description of this type given to respondents was “A player seeks out and kills players that are at a disadvantage. Most commonly they attack players with little health, and/or that are already engaged in combat.” The following quotes give some insight into why they perform this type of griefing:

“Killing people is the most fun, sometimes in some games you can do things like drive cars into people.” (ID: 229)

“I partake in almost exclusively PvP related griefing, especially in full or partial PvP loot MMO’s.” (ID: 1057)

- **Verbal harassment** - This was identified by one griever as the most enjoyable type of griefing, and by another as not necessarily the most enjoyable but the one they perform the most. The initial description of this type given to respondents was “Intentional misuse of the chat interface or voice system in order to offend, harass, insult, threaten, or humiliate another player.” The following quotes give some insight into why they perform this type of griefing:

“Someone who is consistently vocal in a chat discussion within the game I repeat the words that they are saying or repeat a set line of words. To essentially mimic the other person to bring them to a sense of realization that they should stop chatting. This frequently becomes the most entertaining because if the person realizes what they are doing they will stop. IF they are stubborn or not intelligent enough to realize I am trying to get a rise out of them or trying to get them to stop what they are doing it becomes more entertaining for myself.

The type of griefing that I perform the most is verbal abuse when people fail at their tasks during competitive play or when they repeatedly fail at easy tasks by not paying attention.” (ID: 1020)

- **Area control** - This was identified by one griever as the most enjoyable type of griefing. This type was not initially placed in the survey, but partially fit within

'player blocking'. In section 5.1.1.1, area control was identified as a sub-theme of player blocking after the open-ended responses helped to construct a new definition for player blocking. This definition: "A player obstructs another player's escape path to intentionally cause that character's death or confinement. A player may also obstruct another player's view or path from in-game resources (such as items, NPCs and mailboxes), passage to new areas, or claim entire areas as their own, preventing all others." The following quote gives some insight into why they perform this type of griefing:

"Go to an area and take it over and deny entry of other players through use of PvP or eliminating the ability to access mobs of allies by tagging or resetting. An example would be in themepark mmos like WoW kill all players flying into a site and kill flight master then camp the corpses and force all players of enemy faction to leave or if allies mind control their mobs so they become friendly and unkillable denying them the kill or resetting them by taking agro and having them regain full health. This is fun because their objective is compromised by my actions and their inability to alter it the longer they try adds to the entertainment value." (ID: 22)

- **Scamming** - This was identified by one griefer as the most enjoyable type of griefing. The initial description of this type given to respondents was "Any method by which a player attempts to con another player out of something. This could include swindling items using fraudulent schemes or unfair trades". The following quote gives some insight into why they perform this type of griefing:

"My recent favourite way is to scam players' money by gambling games. In game /Roll mechanic, that generates a random number from 1-100 makes it possible. Example: 500Golds minimum bet! Roll 65+ and double your money, roll 100 and get 5x ! The scam starts by the target guy, placing his money in Trade-panel. Even if he wins one or two times, I returned the money, and gained somewhat of trust. Yet as the bet increase, they eventually lose. And even if they keep winning, I just don't return their money." (ID: 133)

Analysing the griefers reasons for performing these types of griefing contributes to the research question "Why does a player cause grief to other players and how do they select their target?"

The first type, corpse and/or spawn camping had a number of reasons for the griefer performing this action. Going through the quotes, the first is disruption, the second and

third is vigilantism, and the final quote implies the player enjoys corpse camping after being provoked by a griefer. The end result is they all get satisfaction in stopping a player from progressing, especially when that player is a griefer themselves. As discussed previously (in section 4.2.2.1) corpse / spawn camping was the most likely type of action to be considered as a form of griefing amongst the self-identified griefers. This means that they are aware that what they are doing is disrupting other players' game experiences, but are enjoying this type of action anyway.

The second type, player killing or ganking, was also mentioned as an enjoyable activity among several griefers, however they failed to describe why that was. The interviewees were pressed for more explanation, but unfortunately their communication stopped at this point. A small explanation from one of the interviewees was that it was especially enjoyable in full or partial loot MMORPGs. This implies that when they kill a player they have access to their loot that they were carrying (whether full loot - access to everything, or partial loot - access is restricted to certain items), essentially killing and robbing them. In this case the reason for the griefing is monetary gain.

The third type, verbal harassment was performed for two reasons. The first reason was for personal enjoyment, and the second was to berate a player for failing at their assigned role. Is this frustration or disciplined authoritative action? In this case it relates to the interviewee that indicated they cause grief in order to get players to notice their mistakes and try to perform better. They also indicated they didn't enjoy this type of griefing but felt it needed to be done.

The fourth type, area control was performed by the griefer for the sole reason of personal enjoyment. They gained satisfaction through disrupting other players' experiences in the game.

The final type discussed as the most enjoyable type of griefing was scamming. The particular type of scamming quoted involved a player run gambling scam, similar to that which was witnessed first-hand and described in the observational journey located in Appendix A (particularly section A.2.2). The reason this scam is conducted is for monetary gain, as the scammer controls the odds of winning virtual currency in their own favour.

With all of this data from interviewees (informing upon the survey data), it was apparent that griefers performed griefing for very different reasons. This research was able to collate the data into themes of these diverse types of griefers.

5.1.2.4 Griever Type Taxonomy

The previous discussion relating to how a griefer selects a particular target, the reasons they started and continue to cause grief, and the most enjoyable types of griefing were analysed to construct a griefer type taxonomy. It should be noted that this taxonomy differentiates between griefer types not by the type of griefing they do, but their motivation for doing it. For example the scamming type of griefing may be performed by a few of the following types of griefers constructed in this taxonomy.

Types of griefers (and the reasons they grief):

Disruptor - The disruptor causes grief for the enjoyment and satisfaction of knowing they are messing with others, and/or making them lose progress in their game. This type of griefer is not excluded from griefing their allies, as indications point to them utilising game mechanics to grief allied players, where traditional methods they utilise against opposing players can't be performed. The disruptor mostly fits the traditional definition of griefing (causing grief intentionally knowing it will disrupt another player's game, and finding the action pleasurable). A griefer that fits the mould of the retaliator type (see below) had this to say about the disruptor that they called the disturber:

"I consider Disturbers those players that abuse the system to interrupt others activity, not to get a monetary gain but to intentionally cause frustration into others." (ID: 1098)

As a side note, an accidental griefer may be mistaken for the Disruptor griefer type; accidental griefers perform actions they find enjoyable that affect other players negatively, but they never had the intention to disrupt another player's game experience when performing these actions.

Advancer - The advancer causes grief to gain progress and advantage in the game. There are multiple avenues they find to make progress through griefing; killing players for loot, stealing items, controlling areas to gain advantage or so forth. Some players however don't see it as purely negative behaviour, but rather a straightforward pragmatic approach. An explicit advancer knows they are griefing and furthering themselves at any one else's expense, while an implicit advancer is simply greedy or pragmatic and their intentional actions are purely for personal gain, without realising it may harm others. This implicit type of advancer has similarities to Foo and Koivisto's (2004a; 2004b) greed player, however they do not note they some players explicitly know their actions cause harm and is more than just greed. The advancer was defined by one griefer:

"I'd define it as a pragmatist character, not evil, who does whatever needs to be done for his/her benefit." (ID: 133)

Competitor - The competitor actively searches for and causes grief as a test of skill; in some cases they are testing their own ability and in other cases that of their target. They find challenge in competing for resources and targeting rivals of themselves and their clans (or guilds). They feel powerful when overcoming their competition. Some competitor's prefer challenging circumstances, while others select those they perceive as weak. A griefer that fit this description said:

"Being competitive is my nature when it comes to MMOs and games in general. I'll do anything to set challengers back." (ID: 1058)

Retaliator - The retaliator simply causes grief after being subjected to griefing themselves. They don't actively search for players to grief but are not afraid to counter griefers should the need arise. Most often they target the initial perpetrator of their griefing incidence, but on occasion innocent players may be subject to their wrath. One player indicated that they gave back more than they received, as shown here:

"Often times if I can find someone that has done it to me, I will do it to them. I'm not a proponent of an eye for an eye, more like an eye for a limb." (ID: 68)

Another implied that the griefing is still a disruption even though they felt they gained some autonomy through retaliation:

"By retaliating to them with griefing, one can be a little more autonomous, not entirely, because eventually you are still dedicating some of your time to them instead of doing what you want to do." (ID: 1098)

Vigilante - The vigilante, unlike the retaliator actively searches for players they believe are causing grief and subjecting them to griefing of their own. They believe they are enacting a form of justice against griefing for the gaming community, by humiliating griefers that target innocents. Doing this also gives them a sense of control through preventative measures rather than the retaliator's reactionary measures. A griefer that fit this description said:

"I would call it [my griefing] more of a Robin Hood-esque type approach, mostly counter griefing trolls and overly confident players." (ID: 1057)

Elitist - The elitist believes that they are skilled players and see a need for disciplinary action against poorly performing players. They take it upon themselves to teach the

weak the error of their ways through grieving them. If allied they are very unforgiving of failure, if opposed they feel the need to chastise the unskilled player. From a grieved player:

“People that annoy everyone, have an elitist attitude (think they are better than everyone) and need to make that known to everyone. It's people like this that wanna make a reputation for themselves as the biggest assholes of the game, and they succeed.” (ID: 754)

And from a self-identified elitist:

“Griefing is an efficient way to get people to do their assigned tasks better. When something goes wrong, being nice is not the best way to handle things. Given that probably 99% of the players in a MMORPG are not competitive everything they do will look like a failure to me. I will try to correct it, but that always goes wrong and ends up in grieving.” (ID: 1020)

Deceiver - The deceiver's goal is to mislead a player through scamming, scheming and entrapment. Quite often their schemes result in stealing another player's hard-earned virtual wealth. Primarily they get satisfaction and enjoyment through controlling and/or betraying another player, and secondarily they seek virtual loot. This type of griefer reflects one of the varieties of grieving that Rubin and Camm (2013) identified as deceptiveness. An interviewed griefer had this to say about the subjects of a deceiver:

“The victim of these acts should not have put himself/herself in this situation. If the game allows this, it can be done. That's what I think. Ninja Looting and Scamming especially, the person who does these, can not be held responsible as grieving.” (ID: 133)

Followed by:

“I have performed all of the above actions myself and felt satisfied and found it hilarious how easy to deceive many players out there.” (ID: 133)

Dominator - The dominator gains pleasure from all types of grieving, with the desire to feel in control, powerful and are happy to challenge any opponents. They actively bait their subject trying to get a reaction from their action. They gain satisfaction when their target responds to their provocation and feel powerful when controlling the situation. One griefer had this to say about the dominator type:

“If someone is strong enough to dominate mob-spawn points, it's his right to do so. Why not get better and compete with the so-called griefer?” (ID: 133)

Figure 21 shows the relationship between each type of griefer via what each type has to gain from their griefing (or the reason why they cause grief). In brief:

- Disruptor causes grief purely for the **pleasure** they gain from it.
- All other types also gain **pleasure** from their griefing.
- Advancer gains **power** by progressing in the game by any means.
- Competitor gains **power** through griefing by **challenging** other players.
- Retaliator **challenges** their attackers.
- Vigilante **challenges** griefers to try to **control** the situation.
- Elitist causes grief to **control** the situation the way they want.
- Deceiver gains **power** through virtual wealth by **controlling** the situation.
- Dominator feels **powerful** by **challenging** other players and **controlling** situations.

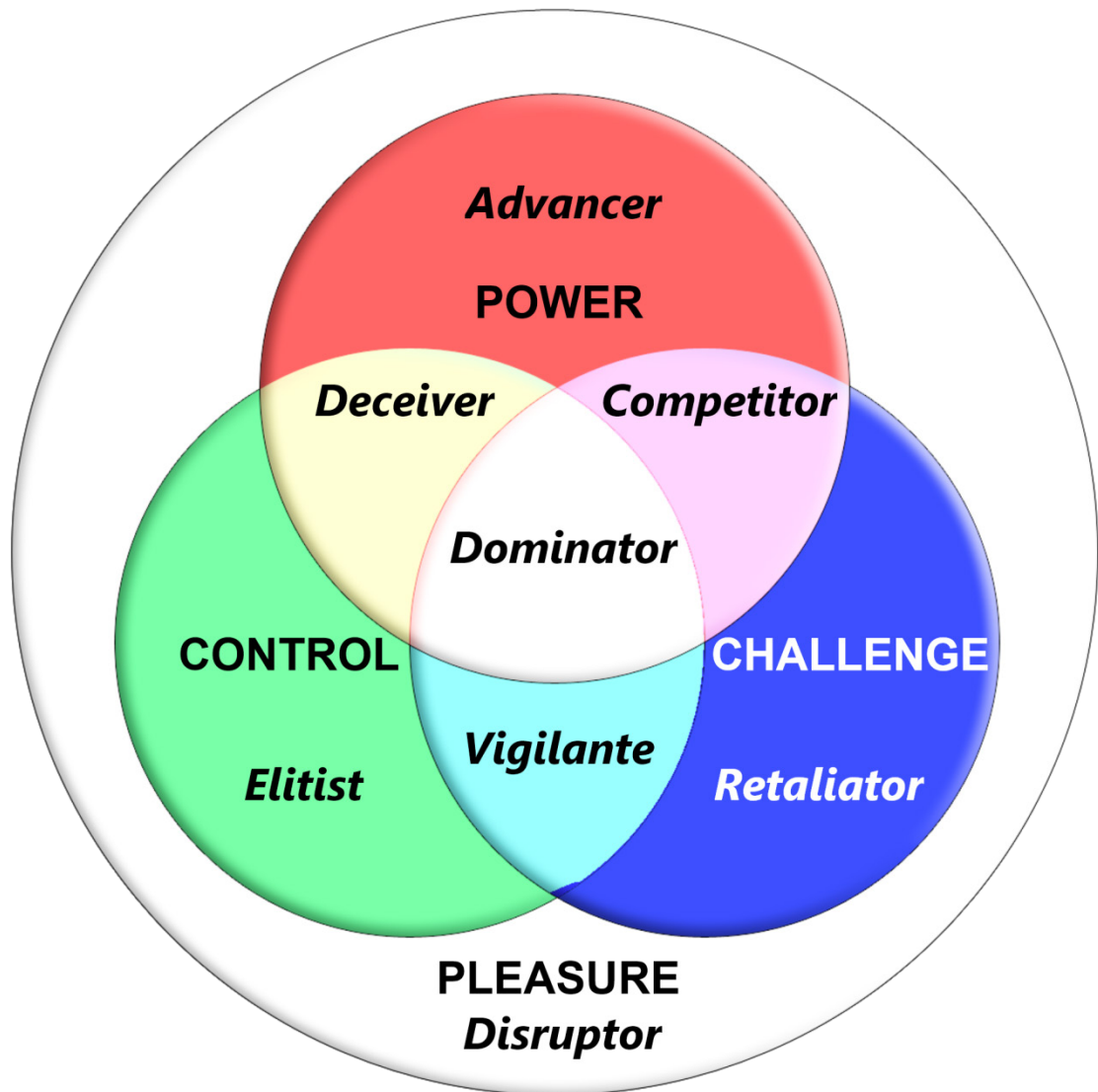


Figure 21: Venn diagram showing the relationship between different types of grievers and what they have to gain from their grieving

Based on what was discovered about each type of griever, theories could be developed regarding their Self-Determination Theory (SDT) factors. Some players may begin grieving because of their lack of the three SDT conditions. If the player is bored or frustrated, perhaps these needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness are not being met. The impact is that the player takes out their emotion(s) on someone else.

The player that is grieving for personal gain of enjoyment or power through progression and monetary gain would be extremely autonomous in that they feel free to perform what they want, regardless of how it affects others. In terms of competence, perhaps they are not achieving the game goals the way that they were designed, but most likely

they are achieving goals they have set for themselves, especially those desiring advancement through competition or deception. Relatedness is perhaps the only form of motivation that is not being fulfilled by the disruptor, advancer and competitor, as the griefer is not connecting with other players, but possibly isolating themselves from the community. The exception is the griefer that chooses to only do so in a group socially with other griefers. The deceiver however must have a need for relatedness as they quite often need to build a rapport with their intended victim first.

The players that are griefing for some control are doing so for their need for competence. While the elitist player already feels competent, they want their whole team or perhaps other players to be competent, and the only way they see to do so is through disciplinary actions. The vigilante also seeks competence by subjecting griefers to their own measures. The retaliator is primarily challenging someone that provoked them and thus also have a need for competence in order to defeat them, however their autonomy has most likely decreased as they have had to focus on the griefer instead of what they were initially doing in the game. By defeating their griefer through retaliation they should be able to return to the activities they were previously enjoying and regain some autonomy. In terms of relatedness, the retaliator probably has not been affected as they are not attacking anyone that may affect their reputation within the community. The vigilante most likely has a high need for relatedness. Their acts of heroism against the griefers should put them in good standing with the game community. The elitist however eschews all relatedness through their actions of griefing that try to encourage players to become more competent. Their need for relatedness must be quite low, as their main goal is competence. As was stated by one player in particular,

“Someone will have to be that person that doesn't care about people's feelings and tells it as it is. Otherwise the situation will not fix itself. People don't know what they are good at until they learn what they are bad at. You can't be good at everything.” (ID: 1020)

Lastly, the dominators most likely have the greatest competence and autonomy of all types as they feel in control and are satisfying their personal objectives, although their need for relatedness must be a lot lower than the other types as their varied griefing will most likely give them a poor reputation amongst the game community.

5.2 Magnitude of Griefing

5.2.1 Open-Ended Survey Answer Discussion

The final question in part five of the survey, asked all participants for any additional thoughts about the magnitude of griefing in general. The question was completely optional and went as follows:

“(Optional) Do you have anything else to add regarding the magnitude and frequency of griefing? Feel free to write as much or as little as you like.”

There were 129 out of 694 respondents (18.6%) that entered their comments regarding the magnitude of griefing (the amount of 694 respondents is based on the amount of respondents that finished part five of the survey). Answers ranged from a short sentence, to a detailed answer of approximately 400 words, with many responses in between these lengths.

5.2.1.1 Most Common Griefing Types

The types of griefing discussed the most in answering this question were as follows:

- Verbal harassment
- Preying on new players
- Spamming
- Scamming
- Mob camping
- Role-play disruption
- Player killing / ganking, and
- Corpse camping

Verbal harassment was indicated by many respondents as being especially frequent, and quite often was felt to be the most intense type of griefing. Multiple respondents that were often grieved in MMORPGs described it as the worst type:

“I still find the verbal attacks to be the worst, as it is for me the only thing that really transcends the 'virtual' and into reality. Game items, the loss of time or insults hurled at my avatar do not really concern me. However, when someone questions my skill or my competence, I'll often end up getting annoyed and taking it back out on that player.” (ID: 157)

And:

“Verbal harassment is by far the most common kind of griefing, as it generally involves spur-of-the-moment insults and exchanges that take little planning. However, it can often be the worst kind, as some people know precisely how to hurt others in ways that will provoke an immediate and extreme emotional reaction. When one player has a grudge against another and attempts to report him or her fail, the continuing abuse can be enough to seriously impact a person's behavior. I nearly quit playing Guild Wars because one person went out of his way to insult me whenever possible.” (ID: 253)

These statements show strong indications of the behavioural impact due to the magnitude of the griefing. The first response indicated retaliation, while the second indicated (almost) quitting the game. These behaviours were not uncommon within the respondent base. Many indicated the frequency of griefing caused them to begin retaliating, resulting in more griefing within the game. Quite a few respondents indicated quitting due to repeated griefing events. One player, that was only occasionally subjected to griefing, went from two years of playing 50 hours a week to completely quitting and uninstalling the game due to a scam performed by griefer that fit the deceiver archetype (describe in section 5.1.2.4):

“I was trade ganked and lost the majority of my game wealth, I logged out, uninstalled the game and have never looked back after 2 years playing 50+ hours/week. The most emotional part wasn't losing the valuable items (I could have sold for real US\$), [it was] a realization I lost 100's of hours of farming in dangerous places where I died dozens of times and lost small amounts many times over the time it took me to gather the large batch I lost. The person who trade ganked me used alt accounts to befriend me over several hours prior to the trade. But that wasn't the emotional part either, it was the helplessness I felt as the attack happened. It was much like a real life violent violation or robbery. It was over in 5 seconds. Once I put all the items in the trade window with his alt, the guy came running in on his main character while I had all the items in the trade window. He used a special attack to knock me a couple screens away from the bank so I couldn't put the items into safety, and since I was overweight with all the items from the closed trade window, I couldn't even move so I just sat there getting slashed, trying to fight back only to have it over in a couple seconds.” (ID: 981)

While this last scenario related to an experienced player, many respondents indicated that new players could be affected the most by the magnitude of griefing. One

response from a player that was subjected to griefing occasionally summarised this perfectly:

“Griefing almost always happens towards easy targets. Which, unfortunately, are usually new players. This can have a huge impact on the players experience and is likely to completely turn them off from the game. Countless times I’ve been told about how a new player was griefed, and then decided the game wasn’t worth playing. This happens all the time and in such frequency, that games will often be forced to make the new player experience much easier, to counter-act the griefing.” (ID: 722)

This negative experience for new players is not an ideal situation for developers and publishers of MMORPGs, whose income relies on the growth of players within their virtual worlds. As well as the immediate loss of players who quit due to griefing, there is also the possibility for potential players to be discouraged from even trying the game due to hearing criticism from disenchanted players.

5.2.1.2 Subjective Factors

Many respondents felt that the magnitude of griefing was very subjective and dependant on several factors. One factor was that the magnitude of griefing was relative to each individual player. One player that had never caused grief before and only rarely subjected to it mentioned that:

“I cannot really answer the question as i severely lack empathy and the ability to care bordering on apathy.” (ID: 873)

Many other respondents indicated that griefing, while frequent, is just a part of the game that needed to be accepted as unavoidable. One in particular (that was subjected to griefing half of the online time, and had performed griefing on occasion) wrote:

“Gamers that have been into online gaming for a long time develop a thick skin. It has worn me down to the point where very often I do not even care anymore about grievers.” (ID: 157)

Other respondents could not accept griefing and disclosed strong emotional response especially to the more frequent and intense types of griefing. One griefed in particular that had never partaken in griefing actions indicated the following:

“It’s disturbing to see how far it goes while you’re supposed to be having fun on a game that was designed for that purpose. Anyway, there is ALWAYS an impact on one’s emotional state or in-game behavior. Some just choose to ignore it while others, like me, need to take a break from the online world to calm down. With experience and as the time goes by, one’s threshold of acceptable griefing goes higher but it’s usually a rude awakening for new players.” (ID: 367)

The MMORPG genre includes a large variety of games, and the difference between each could place greater emphasis on a particular type of griefing. One primarily grieved player explained the difference between being killed by another player in *World of Warcraft* and *EVE Online*:

“World of Warcraft imposes very little penalty for death, especially a death to another player. In other games, this is different; for example, in the game EVE Online, a player will irretrievably lose his or her ship when killed (ships are extremely expensive and, depending on the type of the ship and what type of equipment/cargo it had, it can be very difficult to replace).” (ID: 925)

With such large distinctions between each games’ death penalty, player killing / ganking could be an extreme event in one MMORPG and a minor annoyance in another. Also influencing magnitude was the difference in game mechanics of each MMORPG. One game may impose rules that impede griefing while another facilitates griefing. One respondent explained thoroughly:

“Regarding low frequency of witnessing griefing: the MMO I’ve mostly played is Guild Wars. It’s constructed in a way that most of the content is in fact instanced; you won’t see other people outside specific outposts unless you team up with them. I tend to stick with people from my guild, thus having only proper and nice people with me, if any. I’ve witnessed more griefing (and been a victim of) on more popular MMO World of Warcraft. It’s built to be open world, so you’ll run into other players all the time. This leads to competing for kills for quests and/or rare loot.” (ID: 363)

Regarding game mechanics, some respondents indicated that the way these are designed can lead to increased or decreased occurrences of griefing. Several quotes follow. From two players that had never caused grief to anyone:

“I played EQ1 for about 8 years, and in that game, kill stealing, luring mobs, camping and ninja looting were all seen to extreme levels because the game

mechanics allowed it, and I therefore had episodes where such things caused me great frustration. In EQ2, which I played for about six years, you could not kill steal, lure mobs effectively, or ninja loot well, because the game mechanics removed that from the game.” (ID: 318)

And:

“Games encourage the behavior due to mechanics while others discourage it. In some games, some forms of griefing may not even be possible, such as player blocking when there is no collision detection or gigantic mounts that players can park on top of mailboxes, making them inaccessible. Server can also be a factor.” (ID: 218)

From a player that rarely causes or is subjected to griefing:

“Seems game designers have made it relatively easy to avoid griefers. If someone is griefing you, you have tools/options to shut them down. Even “extreme intensity” griefing, whatever that is, will not bother too many players if they can just go do something else and come back later or put the person on ignore.” (ID: 572)

The design of the MMORPG and its game mechanics can play an important role in controlling the frequency and magnitude of griefing. Some mechanics are intended such as *EVE Online*’s severe death penalties to encourage competitive and intense gameplay. Other mechanics may unintentionally enable griefing and in turn impact upon the grieved player. The section that follows analyses the qualitative data regarding the impact primarily to the grieved player, but also to the griefer.

5.3 Implications of Griefing

5.3.1 Open-Ended Survey Answer Discussion

5.3.1.1 Real-Life Impact of the Griefed

During part six of the survey, the griefed participants were asked whether they worried about in-game griefing during their real life everyday activities, and to provide the intensity of that worry if they did (section 4.4.2.1.5 analysed the answers). Additionally if a griefed participant indicated they did worry, they were given a follow-up question as follows:

“You have indicated that you worry about griefing outside of the game it occurred in. Describe the impact the griefing has placed on your life.”

Most answers provided were about one paragraph in length describing the impact. The largest were about three to four paragraphs.

There were 124 out of 642 griefed respondents (19.3%) that entered comments about the impact griefing placed on their life (The amount of 642 respondents is based on the amount of griefed from dataset 2 described in section 4.1). The following word cloud (Figure 22) is provided to demonstrate the amount and frequency of the different keywords in the responses to the question above:

behaviour, emotional impact, and preoccupation. The themes and sub-themes are outlined below:

Negativity to Socialising - The grieving has had some impact on the way the grieved player interacts and socialises with people in real-life. Sixteen of the respondents mentioned some sort of negativity to their social activities during this open-ended question. The sub-themes are outlined below.

- **Distrust** - After being subjected to grieving, the grieved find it harder to trust people in real-life. Some players also indicated that they are cynical of friendly attitudes, and have become more cautious in social environments.
- **Unsociable** - The grieved becomes reluctant to socialise and tends to avoid people in real-life. One grieved player described that the following may occur after a grieving incident:

“I have a tendency to get really frustrated when I am forced to quit the game. This can lead to me being less than cordial in dealing with people for a short time after I log off.” (ID: 154)

- **Infamy** - The grieved has taken a hit to their real-life reputation amongst their friends, due to rumours circulated in-game. One respondent described stress it caused:

“I’ve had to change my in-game social circles because of incidents of harassment. This has caused me distress outside of the game since I’ve been forced to separate myself from social groups that I’ve been in contact with even outside the game, due to the attacker spreading false claims and rumours about me to people I’ve played with and raising sentiments against me.” (ID: 325)

Changed Gaming Behaviour - The grieving has impacted the way the grieved player feels about MMORPGs, with possible negative connotations. The following is listed from least to most impactful. Thirty four of the respondents mentioned some sort of change to their gaming behaviour during this open-ended question. The sub-themes are outlined below.

- **Dismissal** - While this is the opposite of changing one’s gaming behaviour, respondents suggested that if you were not willing to “Brush it [grieving] off” (maybe not immediately, but as soon as possible), you should probably alter how much or think about why you are playing.

- **Contact developers** - Rather than dismissing the griefing incident, the grieved report the activity to the developers and/or describe ways in which may help prevent them in the future. Alternatively as one respondent put it:

“Complain vociferously to the game developers about exploiting/cheating through any means possible.” (ID: 1023#)

- **Logout** - The grieved player logs out of the game to avoid further confrontation, returning at a later time in hopes of the griefer having moved on.
- **Play less** - The grieved player makes the decision to play the game less, sometimes reluctantly as they were otherwise enjoying the experience, and other times willingly as the griefing experiences has made them enjoy online gaming less.
- **Quit** - The grieved player makes the decision to quit the game, sometimes reluctantly as they were otherwise enjoying the experience, and other times willingly as the griefing experiences has made them enjoy online gaming less. The following quote sums up the reasons for a player wanting to play less or quit the game altogether after griefing incidences:

“Playing a game is a personal hobby. If I am being griefed in the game I am currently playing and enjoying, then the enjoyment I receive from playing the game decreases. That also results in me playing the game less. This, of course, has an effect on me in real life because I would want to play the game but due to the negative experience and stress I would play less or even stop. I'd also go research other games to play instead or spend time doing other activities whether it be in real life (going out to dinner with friends, housework, reading, etc.) or on internet (shopping, social networking, etc.)” (ID: 267)

Emotional Impact - The griefing has impacted the emotional state of the grieved player. There are a number of emotional states that the grieved mentioned. Forty six of the respondents mentioned a change to their emotional state during this open-ended question. The full list (as sub-themes) is below (in order of how many cases of each), and in some cases quotes are provided to explain their emotional states in detail that only the subject could provide.

The incident made me feel:

- Upset, Frustrated, Angry, In a Bad Mood - These moods were felt by many, but the respondents did not elaborate on these feelings.

- **Depressed** - Depression can be a majorly negative emotional state depending on the severity, with the presence of sad, empty, or irritable mood within the individual, accompanied by cognitive changes that affect the capacity to function (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Here are some of the detailed quotes regarding grieving that makes the subject feel depressed:

"It [the grieving] reminds me of all the other things that I think are wrong in my life and in the world. Basically it [the grieving] can act as a catalyst, a pebble thrown into a still pond to start ripples." (ID: 502)

Here is the second quote:

"It [the grieving] often makes me feel depressed, like I can't seem to do anything right. It makes me think something is wrong with me because I can't stand against the griever." (ID: 559)

Here is the final quote:

"Sometimes, if people discover that I'm female, they result to insults like "fat whore", "ugly whore", "get back in the kitchen, stupid bitch", rape jokes, women's rights jokes, and sometimes rape threats. These do throw me into states of depression, because it makes me feel helpless against the hatred and sexism that still exists very strongly. In addition, I have an eating disorder. When people call me fat, although it is in a game and they don't know what I look like, it has made me resort to self-harm." (ID: 679)

- **Stressed** - The grieved felt stressed after being subjected to grieving. Here is a detailed quote regarding the grieving that makes the subject feel stressed:

"Mostly the impact takes the form of added worries to an already stressed life. I play MMORPGs as an escape from the stress in life and a chance to relax. When I start seeing the same stuff that stresses me out in real life start showing up in the place I go to escape that makes me worry that I might have to stop something I enjoy and use to 'detox' because it's becoming just the same as what I'm trying to escape from in the first place." (ID: 287)

- **Paranoid** - The grieved felt paranoid after being subjected to grieving. Here is a detailed quote regarding the grieving that makes the subject feel paranoid:

"I've become rather paranoid after I started playing MMO's but it's not just MMO's. It's also RL experiences, but MMO's have definitely helped advance my

paranoia. When I go somewhere I always check for the nearest exit, in case I need to get out fast. I also ALWAYS have my hand on my phone, in case I need to call someone. I always imagine, before going places, mostly with people I don't know well, how they could beat me up if they wanted to, or some other worst case scenario.” (ID: 394)

- **Anxious** - The grieved felt anxious after being subjected to griefing. Here is a detailed quote regarding the griefing that makes the subject feel anxious:

“At times, it has severely affected my ability to find the worthwhile energy to log into the MMO of choice, knowing that people who could only be described as sociopaths are waiting for me while the owners and operators have flatly refused to assist in any countermeasures. This has accounted for a decrease in overall concentration during some work times, and to an overall nervous energy that has negatively impacted my sleep habits. In addition, due to the bulk of my social associations being found in the MMO of choice it has encouraged a very hermetic lifestyle, socializing with only a few local contacts and family members.” (ID: 476)

Preoccupation - The griefing has occupied the thoughts of the grieved player, whether it is minimal with little to no impact or completely absorbing and a large distraction. 64 of the respondents mentioned their thoughts being preoccupied by the griefing incident to some degree during this open-ended question. The sub-themes are outlined below.

- **Thinking about incident** - This is what was mentioned the most by the grieved as an impact to their real-life with 34 of the responses indicating that they think about the griefing incident during their real-life activities. Their thoughts can involve “what ifs” – what if I did that; what if I said that; what if I retaliated – as a reflection of the incident and wishing they had done things differently. Others think about how they can get revenge or counter griefing in the future. Some respondents indicated that their thoughts cause them to concentrate less on what they were actually doing.
- **Question the incidence** - In their thoughts the grieved questions what happened, why it happened, and also questions the integrity of the griefer. A quote from one player was as follows:

“When I'm being griefed, I usually end up logging out of the game to contemplate the society I live in and I'm scared that those people I see in game are actually fellow members of this same society that will vote and have an influence on the world, judging by how they behave in a fictional one.” (ID: 367)

The open-ended responses help to answer the research question, “What is the impact of grieving from the perspectives of all parties involved?” Primarily the themes above describe the impact to the grieved upon their real-life, and some of these implications have an indirect effect upon the developers of MMORPGs. Referring back to section 4.4.2.1.5, it was identified that 81.2% of grieved players did not worry at all beyond the game and in to their real-life, with only 1.6% placing their worry at high to extreme. Even some of those who placed their worry at low (12.5%) indicated in this open-ended question that it had hardly any impact and just occupied their thoughts outside of the game (see theme above titled “Preoccupation”), with little effect on their real-life activities.

Those that did worry did so with some considerable impact to their real-life. Emotional states such as depression, paranoia and anxiety have greatly affected some of these individuals, as has the ability of some respondents to socialise without feeling disconnected. These are all substantial real-life impacts and it is not “just a game” anymore.

There was also an impact on the amount of time a player spends playing an MMORPG. As identified in section 4.4.2.2, each type of grieving had effected roughly one quarter to one third of the grieved negatively about their desire to play the game they were grieved in. The discussion above backs this up to a degree with responses ranging from players logging out to avoid further grieving to quitting the game altogether, negatively affecting their emotional state, especially when they were enjoying the game prior to the grieving incident. To game developers, a small percentage of players are playing less or leaving altogether. While developers within larger corporations may not feel the impact to their bottom-line, MMORPGs with a small niche market cannot afford to lose players (and players that were actively enjoying themselves) that quit for alternate reasons other than game satisfaction. Players that leave may also report their concerns socially within internet communities potentially deterring others from playing the game discussed.

5.3.1.2 Impact to Incorrectly Labelled Grievers

During part six of the survey, all participants were asked whether they had ever been incorrectly labelled as a griefer by others. Additionally if a respondent indicated that they had been incorrectly labelled as a griefer, they were given a follow-up question (with two questions embedded within) as follows:

“You identified that you have been incorrectly labelled as a griefer. What caused this incorrect labelling? How did that affect you?”

There were 166 out of 656 respondents (25.3%) that believed that they had been incorrectly labelled as a griefer and completed the follow-up questions (The amount of 656 respondents is based on the amount of respondents that finished part six of the survey and therefore were included in dataset 2). Answers ranged from a short sentence, to not much larger than one paragraph. The following word cloud (Figure 23) is provided to demonstrate the amount and frequency of the different keywords in the responses to the question above:



Figure 23: Word cloud depicting keywords relating to the cause and effect of being labelled incorrectly as a griefer.

It should be noted that the word cloud above contains words from the respondents' answers to two questions; the cause *and* effect of being incorrectly labelled a griefer.

During thematic analysis of the answers to this dual question, the responses were separated into their two questions. Each has their own set of themes constructed from analysed codes. The definitions for each theme created were assembled from the provided answers.

The cause of being incorrectly labelled a griefer was analysed first. The answers to why they thought they were incorrectly labelled a griefer fit into one of five key themes; unintentional actions, disagreement of performing within game rules, unfounded accusations, competition, and prejudice. The themes and sub-themes are outlined below:

Unintentional Actions - The player has unintentionally caused a disruption to another through their actions, hence being labelled a griefer. There were 56 of the respondents that reported this during this open-ended question. This is just over one third of the respondents to this question. The sub-themes are outlined below.

- **Misunderstanding** - A simple misunderstanding between two players can cause one to accuse the other that they are griefing. Mentioned types of misunderstandings were cultural differences, misinterpreted humour, and goals of the game.
- **Accidental** - The action that was deemed griefing by a player was accidental. A lot of the time the accused claimed they killed an enemy, took some loot or acquired some resources without actually realising someone else was present and about to claim them. There were other accidental griefing mentioned such as accidentally attacking a friendly player.
- **Claimed intentional team disruption** - A player is accused of intentional team disruption because of their actions. One respondent noted they were a new player and not very skilled, yet rather than help him learn, his team berated him for intentionally performing poorly to be detrimental to the team. Another respondent, in an attempt to provide for his teammates said:

“I was making stuff for my team in Rift's Conquest system. Apparently, +% healing buffs are not very popular and people thought my crafting of them (instead of a recipe I didn't have) was in effort to troll the team (i.e. Team Disruption).” (ID: 1041)

Disagreement of Performing within Game Rules - The player believes they are playing within acceptable game rules, but their actions have been described by

someone else as griefing. There were 47 of the respondents that reported this during this open-ended question. The sub-themes are outlined below.

- **Killing opponents on PvP servers** - The player is engaging in allowable PvP (player versus player) combat on designated servers or in designated areas of the game world, but with their victims claiming that they are ganking. The following quote illustrates this point:

“ON a PvP server, you attack someone of another faction, and that person simply doesn't "want" to be attacked and then reports you as griefing because of it simply because you are preventing them from completing something they were doing.” (ID: 180)

- **Mob camping / farming** - The player is engaging enemies (mobs) and farming (repeatedly killing similar mobs) for specific loot and resources. They are accused of griefing because they are monopolising the mobs and resources.
- **Exaggeration / difference of opinion** - The opinion of one player regarding what is griefing and what is not, is quite different to another player who believes they are causing grief. Additionally the accuser may exaggerate the truth so others believe them. An example of this is a player was labelled a spammer for the following:

“I recruit for my guild in Guild Wars on an almost daily basis. I post my slogan in general chat once a minute (or less frequently). I am often reported as a spammer, but I am doing nothing wrong according to the EULA.” (ID: 253)

EULA stands for the End-User Licence Agreement, which players agree to before logging in to the MMORPG. Quite a few other respondents suggested that some players overuse the term griefer, for example:

“People like to label others a griefer when it suites their own purpose or needs.” (ID: 574)

- **Game mechanics** - A player is utilising intended game mechanics for their own personal enjoyment, which another player claims is causing grief to them. One respondent indicated that they play a bounty hunter provided by the game and that their mark could not accept this. Another suggested that if they are playing within the confines of the game engine, what they are doing should be acceptable.

Unfounded Accusations - The accused believes that the player that accused them did so without any evidence that there was any griefing occurrence. There were 18 of the respondents that reported this during this open-ended question. The sub-themes are outlined below.

- **Accusations of personal gain** - The accused say that a griefer is lying about them for their own enjoyment or because they simply dislike them.
- **Confusion** - A player that was griefed becomes confused with who instigated the actions and blames the wrong person. A few respondents indicated that they were trying to help the griefed player, and the blame of the griefing was placed on them. Others responded that the griefed just accused the closest player after a griefing incident. Finally, there was the claim that a griefed player is so full of rage that they accuse anyone regardless of participation in the griefing incident.

Competition - The competitive nature of the game or between one player and another causes allegations of griefing from one to another. There were 22 of the respondents that reported this during this open-ended question. The sub-themes are outlined below.

- **Retaliation on a griefer** - Half of the respondents under this theme indicated that they were retaliating against a griefer, who in turn accused them of being a griefer. One incident described by a respondent is outlined below:

“Player [in my guild] verbally harassed me, I retaliated. Guild mate defended his griefing friend; I got kicked [from the guild].” (ID: 157)

- **Cheating accusation** - A player is performing well above average at the game through raw talent, and other players believe that they must be cheating or using in-game hacks to gain the advantage. These types of accusations commonly occur in competitive battles where the losing side can't accept the outcome.
- **Natural competition** - A natural competition occurs between two or more players (be it through combat, for resources or another form) in which the loser identifies the normal behaviour as griefing.
- **Defending griefed** - A vigilante type player comes to the rescue of a griefed player (be it through chat channels, combat or other avenues where griefing occurs) and the opposition allege that they are griefing.

Prejudice - A player is accused of griefing due to preconceived unfavourable opinions of them. There were 16 of the respondents that reported this during this open-ended question. The sub-themes are outlined below.

- **Association** - The player accused of griefing is associated with other players, a guild or clan, and/or their name is mistaken for someone else; all of whom have a bad reputation for griefing.
- **Past griefer** - The accused is a known griefer, but in this case of alleged griefing they were not doing anything wrong. An accused wrote:

“Well in my past I have “grieved” and so when I’m not grieving, people tend to just automatically label me. It’s a mislabel that I understand though. It’s kind of ridiculous really. Sometimes you just want to share a chat and they are getting pre-emptively upset.” (ID: 93)

- **Personality** - The personality of the player may be abrupt, harsh or clash with another player that misconstrues their nature as griefing.

The effect of being incorrectly labelled a griefer was analysed next. The answers to what affect it had upon those that were incorrectly labelled a griefer fit into one of four key themes; minor impact, emotional change, behavioural change, and in-game harm. The themes and sub-themes are outlined below:

Minimal Impact - The first theme outlines the responses that indicated that the impact to the accused player was minimal (In these particular cases the accused did not explain the nature of the minor impact) or had no effect upon them at all after being incorrectly labelled a griefer. There were 75 of the respondents that reported this during this open-ended question. The sub-themes are outlined below.

- **No effect** - Fifty four responses indicated that being labelled a griefer had absolutely no impact to them at all. Two quotes follow:

“People are wrong a million times a day. Can’t let every person who thinks $2 + 2 = 5$ affect you.” (ID: 1001)

And,

“[I am] Not affected [by being labelled a griefer], it’s a game for Christ’s sake.”
(ID: 897)

- **Very little effect** - Similar to the above, except that the indication was that being labelled a griefer had very little impact on the accused.
- **Ignore** - The accused have not been affected at all, and ignored their accuser of the alleged griefing, either literally, or through the game's interface by blocking that player.

Emotional Change - The player's mood changes (usually negatively, but not always as seen below in the sub-themes) after being incorrectly labelled a griefer. There were 77 of the respondents that reported this during this open-ended question. The types of emotions felt (sub-themes) are listed below, some including quotes from the respondents.

Being incorrectly labelled a griefer made me feel:

- **Annoyed** - Twenty four of the respondents felt this emotion, double that of the next highest type of emotion felt. A quote from one respondent was as follows:

"It bothered my ego that my actions could be misinterpreted from engaging in a honorable fight for griefing." (ID: 476)

- **Amused** - There were many responses that indicated amusement. A quote from one respondent was as follows:

"It is funny when it does not impact gameplay significantly, but annoying when it makes all people leave." (ID: 147)

- **Angry** - There were many responses that indicated anger. A quote from one respondent was as follows:

"It made me angry that a person would identify very normal behavior as hostile because they felt they held special privilege to a shared resource." (ID: 450)

- **Upset** - There were many responses that indicated feeling upset, however none of them elaborated beyond this indication with anecdotal evidence.

- **Guilty** - There were many responses that indicated feeling guilt. A quote regarding guilt follows:

"I felt bad that i had griefed someone, even unintentionally. I felt guilty for having upset people, but also upset for having been misrepresented." (ID: 61)

- **Frustrated** - There were many responses that indicated frustration, however none of them elaborated beyond this indication with anecdotal evidence.

- **Proud** - There were many responses that indicated feeling pride. A quote from one respondent was as follows:

“If anything, it made ma [sic] [a] little proud as it [the mislabelling] was always done by the type of players I dislike.” (ID: 725)

- **Helpless** - There were a few responses that indicated feeling helplessness, however none of them elaborated beyond this indication with anecdotal evidence.

Behavioural Change - The player’s behaviour changes in various ways after being incorrectly labelled a griefer. There were 40 of the respondents that reported this during this open-ended question. The sub-themes are outlined below.

- **Attempt to resolve situation** - A large number of respondents (25 out of the 40 respondents under this theme) indicated that they attempt to resolve the issue of being mislabelled a griefer. Some discuss it with their accuser maturely, while others make changes to their game behaviour to avoid being misrepresented on another occasion, and some even reported going as far as helping their accuser as indicated in this quote:

“I am sad when I cause someone else to sustain a loss to his or her time, so I offer to stay around and help them.” (ID: 925)

- **Avoid accuser** - For some players that are incorrectly labelled a griefer the simple solution is to avoid the accuser, whether it be to leave the area the accuser is playing in, place them on their ignore list (in-game functions to ignore any correspondence with a player), or simply log out of the game altogether.
- **Played less** - As stated in emotional response to being labelled incorrectly as a griefer, some players felt like they enjoyed the game less. Some also had the desire to player the game less. A quote from one respondent was as follows:

“It [being mislabelled as a griefer] spawned reluctance to play the game and a longing for the days where community ties were stronger and problems were usually worked out in a mature manner.” (ID: 101)

- **Provide less aid to others** - As described in the cause sub-theme “confusion”; some players attempting to help other players were confused for trying to grief those players. The effect is that some of the misrepresented players have less desire to aid other players in the future.

- **Report the accuser** - The player incorrectly labelled as a griefer reports the accuser to the developer using in-game functions. A few players mentioned that they also take screenshots as proof of their innocence.
- **Retaliation** - The player incorrectly labelled as a griefer retaliates against their accuser playing the part that they were initially innocent of.

In-Game Harm - There is some impact made to the player's in-game avatar or reputation after being incorrectly labelled a griefer. There were 17 of the respondents that reported this during this open-ended question. The sub-themes are outlined below.

- **In-Game Attack** - The player that is incorrectly labelled as a griefer is attacked by other players that believe the accusations. The attacks reported by respondents include player killing, verbal abuse, being kicked out of a guild or group and the most extreme, being banned from a game as the person that incorrectly labelled them as a griefer had also reported them to a game moderator.
- **Reputation loss** - Some players reported that their reputation in-game took a hit after being mislabelled by another player as a griefer.

The open-ended responses help to answer the research question, "What is the impact of griefing from the perspectives of all parties involved?" Primarily the themes above describe the impact to any MMORPG player that has ever been incorrectly labelled as a griefer. Indirectly there are some ramifications placed upon the developers of the MMORPGs of the accused players as well.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, there were approximately one quarter of the respondents that believed they have been incorrectly labelled as a griefer on at least a single occasion. This is placing a burden on approximately 55% of these players. The remaining 45% indicated that it had very little to no effect on them, with some of these even choosing to totally ignore their accuser.

Returning to the players that being mislabelled as a griefer impacted (55% of the 166 respondents to this open-ended question), the impact ranged from (mostly negative) emotions, behavioural adjustments, to actual in-game harm to the avatar and/or player reputation. Many players behaviour after being accused was positive by trying to discuss the situation with their accuser and resolve their issues, however some were still negative such as logging out, playing less, and/or retaliating against their accuser - effectively enacting the role of griefer and becoming what they were accused of.

Reviewing these themes, indicates that there would be some negative impact to players' SDT factors (described in section 3.1.3) after being incorrectly labelled a griefer. Avoiding their accuser by playing in alternate game areas or simply logging out of the game has some similarities to the grieved players avoiding a griefer after a griefing incident. In this case the accused players are losing some autonomy by not being able to play the game the way they want to. Losing reputation with the gaming community after being incorrectly labelled a griefer would also surely have some detrimental effect upon that player's relatedness. They would be less likely to be included in social activities if players took the griefing allegations seriously.

The negative impact of players being incorrectly labelled a griefer can indirectly affect an MMORPG developer and/or publisher, as the negativity is not good for the healthiness of a game's profit margins. Unhappy players, be it through emotion or forced behavioural change, could affect their willingness to spend and support the game.

5.3.2 Interview Discussion

5.3.2.1 Impact to the Well Being of the Grieved

During the interviews with the chosen grieved players, they were asked how they felt in relation to their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness after being subjected to griefing as opposed to before. Each of the three needs of motivation from the SDT were described to the interviewees beforehand. Even with descriptions a couple of the interviewees chose not to answer this question, but for those that did, their answers were analysed and constructed into the themes below. Some quotes are provided to show the grieved respondents state of well-being.

No impact on any of the three SDT forms of motivation - One grieved player in particular indicated that their needs for each SDT factor had not changed at all after being subjected to griefing.

"[My needs were] The same as before. For me griefing has never had any effect on any of these things." (ID: 372)

Impact on Autonomy - This theme explores the impact that griefing had on their need for and the autonomy of the grieved players.

- **Less autonomy** - The grieved indicated that their autonomy had decreased after being subjected to griefing, but did not indicate whether after the decrease

that they felt a higher need for autonomy or not. The two quotes below describe their thoughts:

“Obviously I lose some self control because I let someone get the best of me.”
(ID: 1001)

And,

“Completely helpless – I don't feel I am in control of absolutely anything in the game that I'm playing. The griefer has all the power.” (ID: 1126)

- **Less autonomy and a higher need for autonomy** - The grieved indicated that their autonomy had decreased after being subjected to grieving, but also indicated that they felt a higher need for autonomy. In the quote below, the respondent described how they tried but failed to remain in control:

“Several griefers persistently slandered my guild by saying things such as “don't join his guild, they drown puppies and kill kittens,” accusing my guild of being a cult and the like. I felt that I could not ignore those griefers, because if I couldn't see the lies they were posting, I couldn't counter their accusations and assure new players that what they said was untrue. The griefers essentially removed my autonomy with respect to being free to recruit for my guild.” (ID: 253)

- **More autonomy** - One player questioned whether through retaliation whether they were actually gaining autonomy. As discussed in section 5.1.2.4, perhaps a retaliator loses some autonomy after being subjected to grieving, but has a chance to regain their autonomy upon enacting their vengeance, as described in the following quote:

“I could question if I get some sort of enjoyment or thrill out of payback, because obviously I make the choice to. Perhaps I feel like if I can make an even pay back, the attempt is worth it.” (ID: 1001)

Impact on Competence - This theme explores the impact that grieving had on their need for and the competence of the grieved players.

- **Less competence** - The grieved feel less competent after being subjected to grieving, as essentially their competence allowed the griefer to gain an advantage over them. In the case quoted below, there was no indication of whether the player had a greater need of competence afterwards or not.

"I know when I allow actions to happen to be [me] and [the griefer] get too much an upperhand, it is part in my error and sloppy gameplay." (ID: 1001)

- **No effect** - A few of the grieved interviewees indicated that their need for competence was not affected after being subjected to griefing. Their thoughts on this are shown below in the following three quotes:

"Griefing has little effect on my sense of competence. Without trying to sound immodest, I am a very competent player. I rarely have trouble learning the mechanics of a game and using strategy and tactics to use those mechanics to my advantage. Because I have a good understanding of my strengths and weaknesses as a player, griefers are unable to affect me in that respect. In fact, many griefers display their own insecurities and lack of skill in their attempts to disturb others." (ID: 253)

Quote two:

"I feel resentment for the griefer in question, and proceed to happily ignore him. I might be angry for a bit but I totally shrug it off the next day and I don't feel that my character is less capable or defunct." (ID: 855)

Quote three:

"[My competence is] Unaffected – I know that if the griefer were gone, I would go back to my normal level of play." (ID: 1126)

- **More need for competence** - These grieved interviewees indicated that they felt a greater need for competence after being subjected to griefing in order to be able to stand up to their would-be griefer. Two quotes describe this:

"I felt I needed to improve to make sure it didn't happen again or I was better prepared to handle it should it happen again." (ID: 68)

And,

"Outsmarting other players and would be griefers is just another way for me to test my skills, I'd say. I'm definitely a gamer that always likes a challenge, regardless in what form it should happen to take at the time." (ID: 1057)

Impact on Relatedness - This theme explores the impact that griefing had on their need for and the relatedness and social connectedness of the grieved players.

- **Less relatedness** - The grieved felt less of a sense of relatedness after being subjected to griefing, but there was no indication of whether the player had a greater need for relatedness afterwards or not. The two quotes below describe how their relatedness decreased:

“Griefing has a definite impact on my sense of relatedness with the in-game community. The griefer uses lies, emotional appeals, and logical fallacies to skew the community’s perception of me (or another player) and thus is able to turn the community against a particular person.” (ID: 253)

And,

“Completely outcast – Because I don’t (usually ever) grief, and because I see so many other people around me laughing and otherwise encouraging griefing, I feel as if I don’t belong in the game and I am much more capable of quitting playing the game, no matter how much I like any specific aspects of it.” (ID: 1126)

- **Less relatedness, but no effect on the need for relatedness** - The grieved felt less of a sense of relatedness after being subjected to griefing, but they also indicated that they did not feel a greater need for relatedness afterwards. The single respondent describes this below:

“Lately I've been feeling less and less connected with people outside my most intimate social circles because I play irregularly and don't commit myself to guild life, in order to avoid discomfort of "having to commit" when more important matters of my education or family life take place. While I was still active in the guilds, however, rejection or hostility of some players within the group caused me great grief. I don't have to like everyone, but there is a fine line no one should cross just because he's not in agreement with another player. Lack of social skills of other people and selfish attitude are major contributions to why I don't feel comfortable even in totally laid-back, casual guilds, if I can't commit and socialize on regular basis. For these reasons I focus on individual persons rather than on communities, guilds, clans or societies. I never cared for the popular opinion or community as a whole, neither do I crave the kind of attention some players need in order to feel accepted, listened to, cared about and respected.” (ID: 855)

- **More need for relatedness** - The grieved indicated that had a greater need of relatedness after being subjected to griefing. This is described in a simple statement by one grieved player:

“Everyone likes a friend to talk to after someone has been mean. I guess it is natural to gravitate towards your friends.” (ID: 1001)

The discussion with the grieved interview subjects backs up the analysis of section 4.4.2.1.3 in which the impact to SDT factors were analysed empirically. In this section it was stated that the autonomy and relatedness of the grieved were more likely to have been impacted negatively, while competence was mostly not affected but for those it did it could go either way with a slightly negative skew. This analysis fits the descriptions given by interviews. While some grieved players' well-being is not affected, it is more likely for those that are affected to be affected negatively, losing autonomy and relatedness and feeling less competent, with a need to regain these factors.

5.3.2.2 Most Impactful Griefing

The grieved interview subjects were asked during their interviews which type(s) of griefing caused the most impact upon them, and were additionally asked to describe the impact. Generally the types of griefing that had the most impact were split between those directed personally at the player behind the avatar, and those that directly affected the player's avatar. Some that were directed to affect the avatar also indirectly impacted the player in real-life. The following themes describe each type and the impact:

Personal griefing - This theme explores the most impactful griefing on the grieved players that felt directed towards the actual person behind the in-game avatar.

- **Discrimination** - Multiple grieved noted that they (and their friends) have been judged by their ideals and/or demographics. A quote from one respondent described it as:

“Judging people by appearances, misguided or perverted ideals (e.g. the case of abuse me and my friend were subject to in a guild owned by fundamentalist evangelist, incident from 3 years ago)” (ID: 855)

The impact to this player was the abuse of and discrediting of the player's beliefs. This player also mentioned that any griefing that feels more personal than game related makes much more of an impact, as follows:

“[The impact is the] emotional suffering of my friend, regardless whether it was caused by an incident in-game or outside it.” (ID: 855)

The reaction of one respondent when encountering personal attacks is to:

“let your guns do the talking.” (ID: 1001)

- **Emotional Blackmail** - One grieved pointed out that emotional blackmail could be one of the most impactful types of griefing; unfortunately they did not describe this impact.

Avatar affected griefing - This theme explores the most impactful griefing on the grieved players that felt directed towards the in-game avatar.

- **Any griefing that causes loss or time wasted** - While not specific to a particular type of griefing, half of the interviewed grieved responded that any griefing that causes wasted time or lost progress was the most impactful. One interview respondent gave a good description of this type:

“The worst type of griefing is that which causes a loss of in-game items, in-game currency, or the wasting of a long period of time. For example, some games cause damage to items that can not be repaired (or can not be repaired indefinitely); when a player dies, this damage to items is significant, so to have a player intentionally causing other player's deaths has the utmost impact.” (ID: 1126)

The impact to this player is described in the theme title; loss of progress and time wasted. When time is wasted dealing with griefing the player is also prevented from further progress, as described below:

“When games take large amounts of time to acquire certain items, which are then broken by other players who prefer griefing over “playing nice” with others, it is extremely frustrating and quickly turns me off to a game.” (ID: 1126)

The reactions described by several players were to logout or retaliate against the griefer.

- **Player killing / ganking and corpse camping** - This was one specific type of griefing mentioned that fits as a sub-theme of the above theme, as the griefing is causing loss of time and prevention of progression. The grieved indicated that being repeatedly killed by high level characters with no chance of escape had caused them the most impact. The result of this type of griefing in this case was that the player quit, even though they were otherwise enjoying the game.

- **Verbal harassment and Defamation** - A respondent described verbal harassment through defamation of their guild as the most impactful type of griefing encountered. The quote below describes this briefly:

“Several griefers persistently slandered my guild, accusing my guild of being a cult and the like.....I’m fairly certain that their griefing actually did prevent people from joining—since my target audience was brand-new players, how would they know who to listen to?” (ID: 253)

The respondent felt that the slander had impacted upon their in-game reputations of their avatar and also the guild they were promoting, negatively. The griefing indirectly affected them in real-life; they felt extreme stress as described below:

“Having to deal with these griefers on a near-daily basis took a toll on my emotional health, and at one point I was a nervous wreck for several days from the stress it caused.” (ID: 253)

The player described that they had reported the griefers (to no avail) and also tried to counter the accusations against their guild.

- **Spamming** - One grieved interviewee expressed that spamming had the most impact upon them. It seems strange, as the impact they said they felt was annoyance in real-life, but only rarely. They also indicated it didn't affect their avatar in-game at all. In context this interview subject has said that:

“Over the years I’ve gotten so used to griefers being there that I hardly notice they’re even there; I automatically ignore them and tend not to care about what they’re doing.” (ID: 372)

With this in mind, it appears the only griefing that still has any effect on them is spamming as it is so pervasive.

As was identified, some types had implications for the avatar the player controls in-game, some types impacted the player in real-life, and yet others impacted both. However, one respondent claimed:

“Frankly, I don’t see the distinction because there is none (I used to, in early period). Keeping up the false myth of our actions having less significance just because medium of communication changes from first person verbal, visual or physical to a pair of keyboard & a mouse is misguided.” (ID: 855)

The implied message is that a bully is still a bully, and an action that would hurt someone face to face will still hurt them via electronic communication. While this is not disputed, in the online medium of MMORPGs these actions appear to affect people in different ways. Some players still appear to hurt emotionally just as much as if it was a real-life confrontation, while others can completely ignore the perpetrators of the anti-social behaviours.

5.3.2.3 Reactions to Griefing

5.3.2.3.1 New to Veteran Griefed Perspective

At the beginning of the interviews, all selected griefed (from Chapter Five, Table 53) were asked how long they had been playing MMORPGs before they were first subjected to griefing, and how many years they had played MMORPGs in total. The eight respondents (two of which were intersectorors) generally fit into two categories (similarly to the griefers and when they began griefing); Those that were subjected to griefing almost immediately upon beginning MMORPGs (n=4), and those that were not subjected until at least 6 months after they began playing MMORPGs (n=5).

Once again (in similarity to when the griefers began griefing) there appears to be no relationship between when a player started playing MMORPGs to how long it took for them to be personally exposed to griefing, as between the two groups above there is varied MMORPG experience of between 2 years and 18 years having played MMORPGS.

Following on this line of questioning, the griefed interviewees were asked what their reaction was to the first griefing that they had experienced. After analysing all of the responses through thematic analysis, the following themes and their sub-themes were constructed:

The first set looks at the griefed players' reactions at the time of their first griefing incident.

Behavioural - This theme explores the behaviour of the griefed players after their first griefing incident.

- **Try to defend myself** - The player tried to defend themselves using reason, or desperately fought to defend their dignity. Two quotes are shown below:

“As I was new to multiplayer games in general, as well as their communities (on top of being 12 years old, as much as I was mature for my age, I still didn't have

the thick skin, insight, patience, empathy and perspective of today), my reactions to being grieved varied greatly and often escalated into desperate fight-backs to defend own dignity.” (ID: 855)

And,

“When I first realized that other players were directing grieving-related behavior at me, I (not really understanding the phenomenon at the time) tried to defend myself using reason and logic, which ended up doing nothing to solve the problem and only made it easier for them to keep disturbing me.” (ID: 253)

- **Report** - The player reported the griefer for their actions using in-game functions. - A quote from one respondent was as follows:

“They [the developer] had a report function for ingame rule breaking which mostly dealt with it, but never stopped it cropping up so case by case I just reported it and got along with my ingame goals.” (ID: 142)

- **Retaliate** - Even after a first incidence, some players chose to retaliate against their attackers. The two quotes below describe their reactions:

“While I was still new to multiplayer games, I found it fairly difficult to maintain a level head at all times, discern friendly jabs from all-out hostility or hidden malicious intent - the result was I'd overreact, or go on a petty vendetta until I grew tired of it and forgot the incident.” (ID: 855)

And,

“Don't get mad, get even.” (ID: 1057)

Emotional - This theme explores the emotional impact of the grieved players after their first grieving incident.

- **Shock** - The player was shocked and confused that this type of behaviour was conducted by players and had happened to them. The quotes below describe their reactions:

“I was young and quite naïve at the time, so I was actually shocked that people would be so cruel to each other and annoy others in a place that was about having fun.” (ID: 372)

And,

"I was absolutely in shock. As far as I knew, players were not able to kill other players in the game in which I was first grieved." (ID: 1126)

- **Anger** - The player became angry that they were grieved and spiteful of the griefer. The quotes below describe their reactions:

"My reaction at the time is often spite and anger. That is just how I get when I feel someone is trying to get an upper hand on me." (ID: 1001)

And,

"I was angry. I was also young, so objectivity and maturity weren't on my side." (ID: 68)

According to the interviewees, over time they had developed an awareness of griefing, and their reactions have adjusted accordingly. Some remained similar, although they appear to be able to better deal with the incidences. The following describes their reactions if they encountered the same griefing today of the griefing that they were first exposed to.

The following second set of themes looks at how the grieved players indicated they would react today if they encountered the same type of griefing.

Behavioural - This theme explores the behaviour that the grieved players would employ if they were grieved today in the same manner as their first incidence.

- **Ignore** - One of the respondents that initially felt the need to defend themselves, would instead now choose to ignore the griefer and get on with their game. As described below:

"If I tried to reason with someone and became aware they were acting foolishly just to get a reaction out of me or to bolster their own ego, I would put them on a block/ignore list and basically forget about them." (ID: 253)

Another that initially was shocked by the experience of their first griefing incident now chose to ignore the griefers:

"I automatically ignore them and tend not to care about what they're doing." (ID: 372)

- **Report** - The player that initially chose to report players for griefing, still decides to report griefing today. They had no change to their behaviour.

- **Prevention** - The player that desperately tried to defend themselves against griefers and possibly go on a vendetta (as they described it), details that if they were subjected today their reaction would be similar. However, now they have preventative measures in place, by not playing with people or within games that encourage the griefing:

“I also make a conscious effort of not forcefully socializing with people and communities totally in opposition to my own beliefs, and not supporting a game or system that encourages online savagery and barbarism, dehumanizing experience.” (ID: 855)

- **Retaliate** - Retaliation as their method of dealing with griefing did not change for one player, but for another (one that was initially shocked by their first griefing incidence) vengeance is their behaviour lately to griefing. Their reason is due to lack of response to griefing from developers, citing that:

“Gamemasters virtually never care when players are grieved.” (ID: 1126)

Emotional - This theme explores the emotional impact that the grieved players would feel if they were grieved today in the same manner as their first incidence.

- **Anger** - Two of the interviewed grieved stated that they would still hold anger and spite against their attacker of a griefing incident today, but through experience and awareness they feel they could now control the situation in their favour.

As witnessed, over time the reactions of the grieved players that were interviewed shifted from a split between behavioural and emotional, to primarily behavioural reactions. There were still some emotions, but most respondents felt they had control over their emotions and were now able to deal with the griefing in other ways. Their experience in the genre and their awareness of griefing in general has left most of them more accepting of griefing, not because they believe the actions should be accepted, but because over time griefing has become an expected occurrence. This was quite succinctly laid out by one grieved interviewee:

“Over the years I've gotten so used to griefers being there that I hardly notice they're even there.” (ID: 372)

This is not to say that long-time players are no longer affected emotionally, as in section 4.4.2.1 the statistical analysis revealed that 18.8% of the grieved surveyed were

impacted in their real-life at least a little (with some affected quite a lot), and many were impacted in-game. The real problem is that new players are affected with greater intensity, as the griefing phenomenon is something they have not experienced and likely not prepared for.

5.3.2.3.2 Reactions to Specific Types of Griefing

During interviews, each type of griefing (from the survey) was discussed with the grieved respondents. For each type that they had experienced, they were asked to describe their reactions and feelings after being subjected. There were a few times that respondents outlined that they felt the griefing was more of a design flaw in the game that made the action almost acceptable (as most players needed to do it), these have been listed as a 'game design issue'. Some quotes that concisely describe the themes or present the extremes of their emotions are included below. The list shows the types of griefing that the grieved interviewees had been subjected to, and how they would react or feel afterwards:

Verbal harassment

- Ignore the griefer
- React inappropriately against the griefer. An example described by a respondent:

Sometimes ignore it but other times I have reacted inappropriately after years of experiencing it ingame myself.

- Report the griefer
- Stress about the harassment
- Emotionally felt hurt

Spamming

- Ignore the griefer

Kill stealing

- Game design issue, described by one respondent as follows:

"Players are in a trap of either not playing, or playing the "game" by it's unwritten rules. Depending on the severity, it ranges from incidental to playful jabs and all-

out harassment, but nobody will move a finger about it since that's how the game is played. Asshole takes all the spoils, why be nice if you get left behind?" (ID: 855)

Ninja looting

- Retaliation against the griefer, described by one respondent as follows:

"In Conqueronline I used to PK [Player Kill] anybody who ninja looted me, other games its harder to deal with and I have just waited around to ninja loot something back off the other player." (ID: 142)

- Anger over time lost *and* against the griefer
- Frustration, described by one respondent as follows:

"Frustration. Bashing poor keyboard." (ID: 855)

- Blacklist the griefer, described by one respondent as follows:

"These players get blacklisted from attending my events and groups in the future. (I keep a list including name, date, time, event, and any guild they are associated with.)" (ID: 1126)

Player killing / ganking

- Frustration

Corpse / spawn camping

- Frustration, described by one respondent as follows:

"Good grief. Nothing I can write here can explain the frustration of being actively hunted for sport by would-be "elite players" killing everyone on the slightest offence, looting their corpse and denying access to maps and dungeons. Fun for the few, tragedy for the most." (ID: 855)

- Accept it as part of game
- Find ways around the griefer, described by one respondent as follows:

“For example, people claim in the MMO Rift, you can be spawn camped in PvP. While some take it over and over and get angry, many don't realize if you log in and out, you get an immunity buff, and can move to a safe spot and get ready again.” (ID: 1001)

Mob camping

- Accept it as part of game although some cases can be griefing, described by one respondent as follows:

“I am both for and against the idea of Mob Camping being a form of griefing. On one hand, if the mob (mobile, monster) is required for a quest, and someone is killing it over and over so no one else gets credit – yes, this is griefing to me. If the monsters is for a quest, and the killer is asked or shown a need to kill it for a quest – and the killer allows it to be killed by the other party – this is not griefing. If the monster is completely unrelated to any quests, or the killer is not asked – and would allow – another to kill the monster, this is not griefing to me.” (ID: 1126)

- Game design issue, described by multiple respondents as follows:

“You're encouraged to claim a spot for yourself and/or kill the other player that is there, if you don't chances are you won't get loot. It could be argued, since game's system is like that and encourages this kind of behavior to "win", then these are the rules of the game everyone abides by, and if you don't like it, you don't play the game.” (ID: 855)

And,

“A “mob” isn't owned by anyone. Though I suppose mob camping could be perceived as egotistical, I wouldn't consider it griefing.” (ID: 372)

- Annoyed at the griefer
- Retaliate against the griefer
- Offer to group with the griefer, described by one respondent as follows:

“If the mob is a quest mob, I tend to offer to party with the other player so we can mutually benefit.” (ID: 1057)

Preying on new players

- Felt helpless and abused
- Ignore the griefer, described by one respondent as follows:

“When I ask which key is used to open a specific window in a game, I will almost always get an answer of “alt-f4” (which terminates most software). These players also get added to my ignore list rather quickly.” (ID: 1126)

Scamming

- Report the griefer
- Ignore the griefer
- Frustration; felt robbed of time, effort and achievement; Described by one respondent as follows:

“Something that I felt I intrinsically owned, was lost in a second of not looking.” (ID: 855)

- Distrust of other players

Team disruption

- Ignore the griefer
- Annoyed at the griefer
- Kick the griefer from team

Event disruption

- Laugh the griefing incident off
- Just accept it, described by one respondent as follows”

“I can’t recall a single incident of event being totally ruined by player interference.”

- Distress to the organizer of the event, described by one respondent as follows:

“Role-play disruptions and event disruptions can be considered low frequency events since their organization requires a mid-long time, their execution a mid-short time and they are usually repeated few times or none at all if they are disrupted and organizers feel distress.” (ID: 1098)

Role-play disruption

- Distress to the role-players - see the previous quote as it also applies to role-play disruption.

Although all 15 types originally presented to survey respondents were not discussed among the grieved interviewees, those that were discussed display the following characteristics of the grieved. Nearly all types discussed could be optionally ignored, laughed off, or just accepted as part of the game by about half of the interview subjects. Recall that these interview subjects are players that indicated that they were subjected to griefing at least half of the time they played MMORPGs. They are heavily grieved players and yet half of them can ignore the perpetrators or accept the actions and forget about the incidence.

Then we have the grieved that indicated they didn't react to some particular types (and perhaps also participated in them) as they believed these types were a result of poor game design. Mob camping in particular was brought up as a result of poor game design, and referring to Figure 10 (in section 4.2.2.1) the survey respondents (both grieved and griefers) were more likely to indicate that mob camping was not a form of griefing than indicating that it was. In turn, the interviewed grieved questioned why mobs (virtual enemies, monsters or mobiles) needed to be camped at all, and why kill stealing and ninja looting was still present after the genre was already two decades old. Were they are flaw in the design of the game? Can players not share kills to encourage co-operation rather than competition? As described in the observational journey (Appendix A) it is quite annoying when the mobs you are tasked to kill are consistently being killed by players of your own faction. For reference here is a quote from that passage of text:

“Occasionally I would encounter a player that was killing all the enemies that I was tasked to defeat, hindering my progress, but due to this game design I had no option but to wait for enemies to respawn (re-appear in the game world), or try to beat the other player to the punch.”

Some more recent MMORPG developers are trying to defeat some of these flaws through the design of the game mechanics such as *Guild Wars 2* by distributing progression through experience and loot to all players that engage an enemy, making kill stealing impossible (Procopio, 2011). Even the ten year old MMORPG, *World of Warcraft* recently introduced this feature for rare monsters to avoid mob camping, or

'stealing' the kill from someone else (the author discovered this first hand in the latest *World of Warcraft* expansion *Warlords of Draenor*) to alleviate some frustration.

Game design flaws aside, the remaining interviewees that did not choose to ignore and couldn't accept the griefing imposed upon them were impacted both behaviourally and emotionally. Among the types discussed, verbal harassment, ninja looting, corpse / spawn camping, preying on new players and scamming appeared to cause the most implications for the grieved. This reflects the data of Table 46 (in section 4.4.2.1.4), which showed these types as the most impactful to the grieved players of the survey.

From the analysis and discussion conducted, it became apparent that the grieved reacted in a variety of manners after being subjected to griefing. This research was able to collate the data into themes of these diverse reactions from the grieved players.

5.3.2.4 Taxonomy of Reactions

The previous interview discussion relating to how a grieved player reacts or feels after being subjected to griefing, from when they began playing MMORPGs to the present, and also the reactions to different types of griefing were analysed to construct a taxonomy of reactions to griefing.

Behavioural - The grieved players' behaviours changed in reaction to the griefing incidence.

- **Reporting** - The player reports the griefer through in-game functions that either flag the griefer or forward the incident to a game master.
- **Ignoring** - The player uses in-game functions to set the griefer to be ignored. Usually effective against verbal harassment, spamming and scamming (griefing that utilises the chat interface) in that any future griefing is not seen. Part of ignoring can involve 'blacklisting' a player, making sure to never team up with this player again.
- **Acceptance** - The player has learned to accept that the game contains griefing, and tries to get on with what they were doing. It appears that acceptance only occurs after some time and experience in playing MMORPGs, when the player's awareness increases to a point that they realise griefing is inevitable.
- **Retaliation** - They player retaliates against the griefer either with an equivalent attack, or something much greater in hopes of making the griefer stop their actions or logout from the game altogether.

- **Prevention** - The player tries to prevent any griefing occurring by limiting their play to "safe" areas where they know a griefer cannot target them. This obviously has an effect on the player's autonomy, as they are restricting themselves in the game. Another form of prevention is playing an MMORPG that restricts against behaviours or types of griefing that the player wishes to not come in contact with.
- **Avoidance** - Similar to prevention, but after the player has been grieved they will do anything in their power to avoid further confrontation, sometimes at the cost of autonomy avoiding areas of the game they may like to play in, and other times they may simply play the game less.
- **Communication** - The player will attempt to defend themselves verbally or negotiate with the griefer in hopes of them stopping their actions and moving on. Often this leads to increased griefing upon the player that attempted to communicate with the griefer, as they have singled themselves out.
- **Quitting** - Sometimes a player will quit the game due to griefing when they can see no resolution. Usually this is in spite of having enjoyed other aspects of the game enough to have continued to play otherwise.

Emotional - The grieved players reacted with strong emotions after the griefing incidence.

Some players have real-life emotional responses such as anger, sadness, stress, and confusion. These players usually have one of the other reactions above as well, but some players do not have any apparent in-game reaction and acceptance of griefing is not something they are able to do. Some of the emotions experienced:

- Shock
- Confusion
- Anger
- Frustration
- Sadness
- Annoyance
- Stress
- Depression
- Helplessness
- Distrust

5.3.2.5 Impact to the Grievers

5.3.2.5.1 Well Being

During the interviews with the chosen grievers, they were asked how they felt in relation to their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness after performing griefing as opposed to before. Each of the three needs of motivation from the SDT were described to the interviewees beforehand. Even with descriptions a couple of the interviewees chose not to answer this question, and some answered it in their own manner that could still be interpreted but was not descriptive such as placing their needs on a scale of zero to ten. The answers were analysed and constructed into the themes below. Some quotes are provided to show the grievers state of well-being.

Impact on Autonomy - There was an impact to the autonomy of the grieved players after the griefing incidence.

- **Less autonomy** - One griever indicated their autonomy decreases after performing griefing. Unfortunately no description was provided by the single griever to allude to why they thought this.
- **No effect** - One griever indicated their need for autonomy had not changed after performing griefing:

“I really don’t feel a need for a sense of control after performing griefing. I usually do it to get a cheap laugh.” (ID: 1058)

- **More autonomy** - Several grievers indicated their autonomy had increased after griefing. One griever in particular rated their autonomy a score of seven out of ten after griefing, implying that it was quite high. The following quote belonged to a griever that fit the elitist description (they actually described themselves as becoming elitist), and they imply that by griefing they are regaining some lost autonomy (caused by an unskilled team member):

“When someone stands between me and my goal and repeatedly makes me fail my objective, frustration will build up and I will grief him. In 90% of the cases will still result in me not achieving my goal but at least the frustration is somewhat gone.” (ID: 1020)

The next quote is from a player that somewhat fit within the vigilante and retaliator types:

“By griefing i can remove disturbers. By retaliating to them with griefing, one can be a little more autonomous, not entirely because eventually you are still dedicating some of your time to them instead of doing what you want to do.” (ID: 1098)

Impact on Competence - There was an impact to the competence of the grieved players after the griefing incidence.

- **More competence** - Most of the griefers that were interviewed indicated an increase to their sense of competence after performing griefing. The griever that was rating their SDT factors out of ten, scored competence eight out of ten after griefing, implying that it was high. Quotes from other interviews are supplied below:

“It can be additive so increased.” (ID: 22)

“Making a conflict personal is one of the best ways of getting the most out of your competition. Defending your name and credibility is often just as important as protecting your pixels.” (ID: 1057)

“Sometimes griefing does make me feel a little more skilled.” (ID: 1058)

One interview respondent simply indicated that competence was their greatest need (or perhaps highest form) of motivation after they performed griefing, but with no indication as to why. An intersector implied that they felt more competent after griefing with this statement:

“It’s nice to outwit a player and overpower him or her.” (ID: 68)

- **Higher need for competence** - A few griefers described a higher need for competence in relation to griefing, not necessarily that their competence had increased after griefing. The following quote implies that the interviewed griever’s need for competence increases after griefing, and they are also trying to increase the need for competence of their allies that they feel are unskilled:

“As I said, I would not grief someone for no reason. If he became the target of my griefing it means that I feel that my skills are better then his and I want him to do better or disappear from my sight.” (ID: 1020)

Another quote indicates that competence is definitely needed by the griever:

“Griefing players using exploits or game biases requires a good knowledge of the game and its mechanics and fast thinking capability.” (ID: 1098)

Impact on Relatedness - There was an impact to the relatedness of the grieved players after the griefing incidence.

- **Less relatedness** - Several griefers indicated their relatedness had decreased after griefing. The griefer that was rating their SDT factors out of ten, scored relatedness one out of ten after griefing, implying that it was extremely low. Quotes from other interviews are supplied below:

“I don’t feel related to the community after griefing, and generally, the more i grief the less likely it is that i will keep playing the game for long.” (ID: 1098)

“I know that in most cases griefing someone will result in a burnt bridge (people are way too sensitive these days if you ask me) but...” (ID: 1020)

The quote above went on to describe it could have the opposite effect as described under ‘more relatedness’.

- **More relatedness** - The following quote continues on from the final quote of ‘less relatedness’ indicating an increased relatedness:

“... but it will also strengthen a number of other bridges when alleviating a frustrating situation. Some things just have to be said or done and people that try to always be politically correct or not offend other players will not have the courage to speak up.” (ID: 1020)

In the interview with this player (once again the self-identified elitist), it was asked of them to explain how their relatedness increased through griefing. They had this to say:

“Having an unskilled player around and having to suffer because of his mistakes every time will frustrate the rest of the players [in the team] and even make them quit. I don’t know if the bonds grow stronger [by disciplining and/or removing a less skilled player from the group], it’s mostly the case that not everyone likes everyone in competitive guilds, but as long as there aren’t any players raising the levels of frustration, the least I can say is that the bonds won’t get weaker.” (ID: 1020)

- **No effect** - Two quotes relating to this are supplied below:

“I have no sense of need for Relatedness when I play MMOs by myself. If I am representing a guild however, I tend not to grief as much so I don’t bring a bad reputation to the clan I represent unless it is someone from a rival clan.” (ID: 1058)

And,

“Whether I make a name for myself as being some great PvPer or just another troll isn’t all that important to me, I stay connected to the community in other ways such as writing class and raid boss strategy guides.” (ID: 1057)

When reviewing the effects upon the well-being of the griefers, it appears as if their autonomy is more likely to increase, their competence increases as does their need for competence, and their relatedness is more likely to decrease although may increase. The likelihood of these events depends upon the type of griever, as an example only the elitist mentioned a chance of increased relatedness. The quantitative data (in section 4.4.2.1.4) from the survey regarding the impact to the griefers SDT factors indicated very similar results. The personal observations above add to the reasons why these increases and decreases are occurring.

This analysis of the interviews did not provide unexpected outcomes, as griefers are usually autonomous, competent and are expected to have high needs of both, while their need for relatedness depends especially on the type of griever that they are (see 5.1.2.4; the griever type taxonomy for more discussion about the separate types of griefers and their theorised SDT needs). The surprising discussion was the one with the self-identified elitist, in that they described that their bond with the team may strengthen upon eradicating the weaknesses through griefing, and thus, on occasions increasing their relatedness.

5.3.2.5.2 Personal Gain or Loss

Interviewed griefers were asked about each type of griefing that they perform and what they feel they gain or potentially lose from the griefing. Some types were discussed a lot more than others by the interview pool, and one in particular was not discussed at all. None of the interviewed griefers had performed event disruption and so this list does not contain this type of griefing. The themes below for each type of griefing list the personal gain or the potential loss:

Verbal Harassment

- **Power and Control** - Some griefers harass others verbally to impose their power upon them, and/or gain some control, for example:

"I learned that griefing is an efficient way to get people to do their assigned tasks better." (ID: 1020)

- **Pleasure** - Other griefers purely derive pleasure from harassing other players.

Spamming

- **Loss of reputation and possibly bannable offence** - The griefers interviewed all advised they did perform spamming themselves, and some indicated that it could be a potentially bannable type of griefing or at the very least makes you known amongst the entire community as a spammer, as described in the following quote:

"I have rarely heard about people managing to conduct such activities for long without either being removed from the game by admins, without being ostracized by the community or, just in one case, starting their own sub-community." (ID: 1098)

Kill Stealing

- **Power / progression** - Kill stealing is performed by griefers focused on gaining power through any means of progression. This quote illustrates the point:

"If I need a certain mob kill in order to move ahead in the game I will kill steal without hesitation." (ID: 1058)

Ninja Looting

- **Pleasure** - Ninja looting can provide a griefer with pleasure through deception, as described in the following quote:

"Felt satisfied and found it hilarious how easy to deceive many players out there." (ID: 133)

- **Power** - Power can be gained by obtaining better gear for the griefers avatar. These griefers describe this gain through ninja looting:

“Ninja looting is another way of advancing in a game so I will not hesitate to do that either.” (ID: 1058)

Also from the same interviewed griefer:

“With Ninja Looting, I don’t feel anything. To me it is just gaining loot to better myself.” (ID: 1058)

From a different griefer:

“Ninja looting often gets you gear but...” (ID: 229)

The final quote above indicates the griefer can gain in-game treasure through ninja looting, but as described in the next point, it can be at the expense of reputation among the community of the game.

- **Loss of reputation** - There is most likely a loss of reputation for the griefer, as ninja looting is almost always pinned on the correct culprit, therefore anyone affected by this type of griefing will likely spread justified warnings against playing with the griefer. The following quote follows on from the previous quote regarding gaining gear:

“...but earns you a bad reputation with anyone you group with.” (ID: 229)

Player Killing / Ganking

- **Power** - Some griefers simply kill others as a form of power imposition, as implied in this quote:

“It’s more of a power thing, making the other player feel helpless against you.”
(ID: 229)

Or if the MMORPG allows theft of the items from the player that you kill, other players may do it purely to gain power through killing, as described below:

“I partake in almost exclusively PvP related griefing, especially in full or partial PvP loot MMO’s.” (ID: 1057)

In the second case, the game expressly allows this behaviour and all players should be aware that if an item is on their person (instead of safely banked away) it has the potential to be lost. A game called *EVE Online* is one such MMORPG that allows this kind of behaviour and often appears in headlines when a player loses a substantial amount of virtual loot. A recent example

describes a player that lost roughly USD \$1,500 worth of virtual cargo in this science fiction space simulated MMORPG:

“Earlier this afternoon, an EVE Online player transporting 84 in-game time cards, known as PLEX, was gunned down outside of the main trading hub of Jita. With PLEX being slightly higher than the price of a subscription, the bounty of the cargo was an estimated \$1,500. Unfortunately for the pilot that claimed the bountiful kill, not a single PLEX survived the ships destruction - it was all vapourised. Ouch.” (Wilson, 2014)

- **Competition** - Some griefers kill other players as they belong to a rival guild, an example is provided below:

“If they are in a rival guild then I will grief them until either they leave the area or I get outnumbered and die.” (ID: 1058)

- **Vengeance** - Other players seek vengeance against someone that grieved them, or are associated with the griever, described below:

“If I was killed whilst levelling or going about my day-to-day, I’d make sure the other faction paid for my inconvenience.” (ID: 68)

Corpse / Spawn Camping

- **Pleasure** - One griever indicated that they gain pleasure in disrupting another player by wasting their time:

“Corpse camping gets you nothing but the satisfaction of knowing you caused the other player to lose time playing the game.” (ID: 229)

Another griever described their pleasure was gained through retaliating against a griever by corpse camping them:

“Corpse camping was to harass someone in-game that had killed me or inconvenienced me. I wanted to let them know that if they play with fire, they will get burnt. While it’s not as noble as simply teaching them a lesson, it also feels good to know that you’ve made them pay for what they’ve done.” (ID: 68)

- **Gain reputation / feel powerful** - Some griefers conduct corpse camping to feel powerful against their opponents and possibly gain a reputation as a powerful player. The following quotes illustrate this:

“I prefer doing the griefing it alone because in every community there has to be a ‘bad guy’ and I would rather take that upon myself. I do it to ‘known’ PvPers if I happen to come across them. I know it makes them mad because they care about PvP a lot and it makes me feel better than them (even if it’s an unfair fight, let’s say 10 vs 1).” (ID: 1020)

“When spawn camping someone I feel like I am sending a message, almost like saying “you are not welcome here.” (ID: 1058)

Vigilante type griefers gain a good reputation with those opposed to griefing and a sense of power and pleasure when they corpse / spawn camp another griefer as described by one griefer:

“I do it as a means to police an area, rather than calling in a GM in game, myself as a competitive gamer will Corpse and Spawn camp a person until they log out of the game. To me I feel good, I feel I have done the zone or area a justice or sense of good for the community within the game.” (ID: 1156)

- **Autonomy** - Through retaliation against a griefer by corpse camping them, one retaliator specifically mentioned they gained autonomy that they had previously lost due to being grieved.

Mob Camping

- **Pleasure** - The pleasure in mob camping was questioned by one interviewed griefer, indicating that it was denying another player progression that gave them pleasure:

“Generally its not fun to camp a mob, its boring. Its fun to camp a mob someone else needs then denying them it and making them leave is fun.” (ID: 22)

- **Loot / progression / power** - Quite a few griefers mentioned that mob camping was purely done by them for the loot that the mob held and that they did not deliberately grief others in doing so, that it was more of an indirect effect. The implication is that mob camping is more of a game design issue. The following quotes describe their thoughts:

“I do Mob Camp a lot. If I need an item then I will sit there and kill that mob over and over until I get the item. It makes me feel really bored but when you are competitive you need to have the best items. If endless camping is what it takes to get those items then I will do it.” (ID: 1020)

“I have seen Mob Camping being done. It’s dependent on whether the game encourages it with a quest or reward.” (ID: 1156)

“I tend to think of it as me vs the random number generator, not other players. If the item was guaranteed to drop every time, I wouldn’t be camping it.” (ID: 1057)

Mob Luring / Training

- **Pleasure** - One griefer indicated they lure mobs to attack other players for fun as follows:

“If I can’t PvP in a certain area, I will try and group up some agro mobs and run to their [other players] area and die.” (ID: 1058)

Player Blocking

- **Pleasure** - A griefer indicated that they gain pleasure by blocking players’ paths or objects they require.
- **Control and power** - Additionally griefers can gain control over areas which in turn gives them power through advantage, as described by one interviewed griefer:

“It can also be having control over a certain camp of monsters or area that would give me some sort of strategic advantage in the future.” (ID: 1057)

Exploiting Loopholes

- **Power** - Griefers see exploitation of game mechanics used as a means to gain power or advantage, but not necessarily to cause grief. This is illustrated by one griefers response:

“I don’t see someone finding an exploit and thinking “I’m going to use this to gain an advantage, I’m going to make so many people mad”. I think it’s more of “I’m going to use this to gain this advantage”. Sure, some people might be annoyed by it, but most of the times they wouldn’t do it themselves even if they knew about the exploit.” (ID: 1020)

Another griefer described that the advantage gained by exploiting loopholes may help in conducting other forms of griefing:

“Exploiting loopholes is used as a medium to perform different kinds of griefing, such as creating a very powerful character that can do an unintended high

damage and then mob-camping or spawn-camping other players, or scamming people by using a currency acquired through cheats/hacks/ exploits.” (ID: 1098)

- **Potentially bannable offence** - Some griefers indicated they were reluctant to exploit a loophole, and one described that it was because of the chance of being caught and banned:

“Exploiting in a MMOPRG always ends up bad, by being banned or rerolled, so there is no need to grief over it, a small bug report will have the situation resolved.” (ID: 1020)

Preying on New Players

- **Pleasure** - Preying on new players was only mentioned by one griever as something that gave them pleasure when they were bored of other activities in the game.

Scamming

- **Pleasure** - Scamming was noted by one griever as a pleasurable type of griefing.
- **Loot / power** - Other griefers mentioned that their scams involved acquiring virtual items of wealth and power, and a few clarified that it was the greedy ambitions driving them, not the griefing itself. The quotes describing these are shown below:

“My recent favourite way is to scam players' money by gambling games. The scam starts by the target guy, placing his money in Trade-panel. Even if he wins one or two times, I returned the money, and gained somewhat of trust. Yet as the bet increase, they eventually lose. And even if they keep winning, I just don't return their money.” (ID: 133)

“There will always be players looking to make a quick earning and scam other players, but I doubt that the purpose of the scamming is to grief someone. It's rather to earn something quick without having to put effort in it.” (ID: 1020)

“Scamming only works on really stupid players who are gullible, and can get you anything from lots of gold, to tons of items, but...” (ID: 229)

This part of the quote above relates to gaining loot, while the 'but' continues on to say it could result in your account with the game being banned, as described in the next point.

- **Potentially bannable offence** - Scamming is a high reward, high risk type of griefing. Some choose to take the risks, while other griefers indicated they do not, at the fear of their account being punished by banning or other form. The following quote describe this:

"...but at a higher risk of being banned. I usually don't try to scam people, it's at too high of a risk of being banned from the game." (ID: 229)

Another quote from a respondent was as follows:

"I frown upon scamming and tend to avoid it. It is usually punishable by ToS." (ID: 1058)

ToS refers to the Terms of Service. The same respondent then said:

"I have never been a fan of scamming. It depends how high the penalty is. I will obviously will [sic] not do anything that will put my account in jeopardy but if my biggest penalty is losing gear/xp, ill push the limits." (ID: 1058)

Team Disruption

- **Competence and control** - One griever in particular indicated that they regularly grief their own team mates (through verbal harassment) with the goal of forcing and controlling unskilled players to achieve higher competence and therefore complete their team's objectives. However, sometimes this devolves into group arguments, as described here:

"The longer it takes to get to the desired objective the more intense and targeted the griefing will become. For example it will start with "guys, we need to do more damage", evolve to "this guy [name] needs to step it up and do more damage he is way behind", then as the time goes by it get out of hand to everyone shouting something like "omg, you [name] are completely retarded, sort your shit out" etc." (ID: 1020)

Role-Play Disruption

- **Pleasure** - One griever indicated they gain pleasure through role-playing on evil character alongside other role-players and generally disrupting their activities.

The gains of the griefers mostly describe how they gain satisfaction in grieving through:

- Pleasure,
- Control,
- power imposition,
- challenging other griefers for reputation or vengeance, and/or
- acquiring loot or wealth which makes them more powerful

The griefers are more likely to avoid a type of grieving when it has negative consequences such as:

- Loss of reputation among the game community or
- Account banning

It appears that for griefers (of which nearly all gain some form of pleasure from their actions) have much more to gain than lose. Some of them weigh the risks out, and choose appropriately for them, but many of the types of grieving can be conducted with no penalty at all. The types of grieving have been related in the open-ended survey answers and the interviews as poor game design that not necessarily encourages grieving behaviour, but forces it in order for a player to remain competitive. The following quote describes how game design flaws may be exploited to gain advantage:

“I think flaws in game design lead to more grieving than anything. If there is a loophole that lets a player amass an unreasonable amount of power for a very small investment or time sink, I believe that 99% of the time the bug will be leaked pretty publicly and then thoroughly abused, regardless of what the punishment will be.” (ID: 1057)

Some players will do anything to get the edge and remain a top-rated player, especially in the competitive scene where guilds and clans are rushing to be the world first in conquering specific game objectives. Perhaps game developers need to take more control over their products, and some have been doing so incorporating anti-griefing features, as described earlier regarding *Guild Wars 2*. While this thesis' goal is not to give solutions to grieving, it can be identified from the discussion above that the griefers are not too worried about negative consequences, so perhaps the answer lies in rewarding good behaviour rather than penalising bad behaviour. This reversed approach was integrated into *League of Legends* in 2012, a game from the MOBA (multiplayer online battle arena) genre by *Riot Games*, in which they reinforce positive behaviour through an honour system. Players can reward others for being friendly,

helpful, a good team player or honourable opponent (Chambers, 2012). *Riot Games* has also developed in the past a player run tribunal to help discipline toxic behaviour, and recently rewarded players with a clean behavioural record in 2014 (Bellezza, 2015) - clean meaning the player had not received a chat restriction, ranked restriction, or banning.

Chapter 6: Conclusions & Recommendations

As outlined in the introduction, an unknown but substantial proportion of players that engage in Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games (MMORPGs) experience a phenomenon known as griefing. Griefing has been occurring in online gaming communities since before MMORPGs came into existence. Players of Multi-User Dungeons (MUDs) that found enjoyment through imposition on others were identified by Bartle (1996) as the “Killer” player type. MUDs were the text-based precursors to the graphical and persistent social worlds that MMORPGs became. MMORPGs are much more complex than other types of online games, with their large persistent worlds and many rules and mechanics built into the game, giving more room for griefing to flourish. This is a major reason that this research has focused on this genre of online game.

Attempts have been made by various researchers in the past to define griefing, and the term has come to encompass many malicious and anti-social actions within virtual worlds. Through a review of the literature it was determined that the most common ground among researchers regarding the definition of griefing was that three effects need to be present for an action to be deemed griefing. Firstly, the action must be intentional. Secondly, the action disrupts another player’s enjoyment in the game. Lastly, the instigator gains pleasure from causing the disruption through their actions. If these three effects are present, then the player causing the action can be called a griefer. In addition to pleasure from the griefing act itself, they may also gain virtual currency, loot, control, or power.

During analysis of the data obtained, it was determined that these three effects still hold up as required effects for an action to be deemed griefing. However, it was also found that some players could be considered to be causing grief to other players by accident. In these cases their action was intentional for their own purposes, but they had no intention for it to disrupt another player. In these cases often a simple apology could right their wrong and all would be forgiven.

During the literature review of griefing, it was discovered that there is very little data from the perspective of the target of griefing actions, an area this research has addressed. Throughout this thesis these targets have been deliberately referred to as the grieved or grieved player to indicate that they were the target of griefing. Some of these players can easily shrug griefing off and don’t see themselves as a “victim”. For this reason the word “victim” was intentionally avoided, as it implies completely negative connotations. In some cases during the analysis of data it was found that

there can be positives to being the recipient of griefing which will be discussed further in the conclusion. There was also an unexpected “victim”; the player that equally performs as much griefing as they are subjected to and in regular quantities. This research has referred to this player as an intersector, for lack of an established term. The intersector is an especially important and original concept, as it signifies that there are many players out there that can be a part of both groups; griefers and the grieved. This finding indicates that perhaps griefing is often accepted within the game communities, with players out there giving as much as they get.

When viewing the perceptions of the griefers, the grieved and the intersectors during this research, it became obvious that they had varying opinions and perceived many aspects of griefing quite differently. Referring back to the original research question, the purpose of this research was to identify the causes, magnitude and implications of griefing in MMORPGs, through three separate sub-questions:

Within MMORPGS:

- Why does a player cause grief to other players and how do they select their target?
- What magnitude of griefing exists, and how much can be tolerated?
- What is the impact of griefing from the perspectives of all parties⁸ involved?

The goal of answering these questions was accomplished using a mixed-methodology called the “Sequential Explanatory Strategy” in which quantitative data collection and analysis of a survey of 1188 participants was followed by interviews with 15 selected respondents to form a collection of qualitative data and its analysis. The second phase strengthened and informed upon the first. While the sample of survey participants was compared against highly cited industry research and deemed representative, it was limited to an English speaking audience that was primarily of white Caucasian descent.

To assist with the first sub-question regarding causes, the research employed Yee’s Theory of Motivation (2006a). By discovering the respondent’s motivations for playing MMORPGs, the research identified which traits related to griefing. To assist with the impact to the players, the research utilised the Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and its three conditions of autonomy, competence and relatedness applied to an MMORPG player.

⁸ Those involved with griefing included the griefer themselves, but more importantly those that are targeted by acts of griefing.

6.1 Causes of Griefing

The purpose of the first sub-question regarding the cause of griefing was to identify the perceived differences in the perceived causes of griefing among varying individuals, such as the griefers, the grieved, and intersector. To do so, the research identified which types of actions were deemed griefing, factors that motivated a player to play MMORPGs, factors that motivated a player to cause grief, and how griefers selected their targets.

All respondents were asked to identify which actions performed in an MMORPG actually constituted griefing. Both the grieved players and the griefers mostly agreed that verbal harassment, spamming, ninja looting, corpse camping, player blocking, preying on new players, scamming, team disruption and event disruption were all types of griefing, while mob camping was not. Griefers were more likely to consider that player ganking and mob luring were also not forms of griefing. The majority of the griefers that indicated player ganking, corpse camping and mob camping were not griefing also specified further in the survey that they performed these actions more often. The assumption is that these players partake in these actions as they feel they are intended parts of the game and allowable by the game developers. In the same regard, many of the griefers thought that scamming was indeed griefing, and were more likely not to perform this action. The interviewed griefers put this down to the risk involved, with indications that punishments such as account banning were a strong deterrent.

In regards to Yee's Motivational Factors (Yee, 2006a), all males scored higher in the achievement factors than females. The primary difference was identified in the achievement sub-factor called competition. This indicates that males may be more likely to enjoy griefing due to the competition sub-factor relating to challenge, provocation and domination of other players. This was confirmed in this research when both males and female griefers indicated a high level of motivation through competition. The interviewed griefers backed up this finding to some degree, with more than half of them agreeing competition was a strong motivating factor for griefing. The competition could be equal, in which the griefer seeks skilled opponents to best, or unfair, in which the griefer seeks advantageous scenarios against a player. Although the second type indicates it is not competition that they are after, but domination.

The research identified different factors that contributed towards the causes of griefing, such as particular demographics of the targeted player, characteristics of their avatar

they portrayed in-game, and other MMORPG related factors. All respondents strongly indicated that griefers felt more comfortable to cause grief when in a group with other griefers. The grieved felt very strongly that the anonymous nature of online gaming contributed towards griefing. The anonymity allows griefers to abandon any inhibitions and regular social standards when interacting with other people online, and reflects the “Online Disinhibition Effect” discussed by Suler (2004). While a little less than half of the griefers also agreed with anonymity creating opportunity for griefing, they also indicated additional reasons for causing grief.

Griefers rated personal enjoyment very high; strengthening the definition of griefing that to be called a griefer you should gain pleasure from your actions of disruption. The interviewed griefers and intersectorors gave detailed reports on which types of griefing they found the most pleasurable and the reasons why. Corpse and spawn camping was pleasurable to some interviewees as they felt strong satisfaction and pleasure from wasting a player’s time through repeatedly killing them as they respawn. A few indicated the satisfaction was from repeatedly killing griefers or exploiters, acting as some sort of vigilante. Player ganking was another type flagged as highly enjoyable, with an indication that pleasure was gained through taking advantage of weakened players, while another griefer indicated they performed this type for the potential loot they could steal from the defeated player. Retaliation was also a very likely reason for causing grief. Similar to the vigilante, vengeance was rated highly by griefers, but especially high by intersectorors, and was the first indication of many that intersectorors were primarily causing grief to retaliate against griefing.

In regards to the demographics of the grieved player, there were convincingly highly targeted demographics of grieved players for griefing. Females, 16 to 17 year olds and Gay/Lesbian respondents were the most likely to indicate that they were targeted for griefing due to that particular demographic. Australian residents and transsexuals also rated highly but had small sample sizes. The full-time griefers indicated that a player’s sexual orientation and gender often factored into their decision to target a player for griefing.

In regards to a grieved player’s in-game avatar, the main characteristics that griefers targeted were the level or experience of the avatar, the race or faction of the avatar, and the guild or clan the avatar represents. The interviewed griefers indicated they targeted players of low level or experience to gain advantage, but also players of equal level and that are highly skilled in order to test their abilities. The guild of a player was

also a factor to some interviewed grievers, as they felt the need to cause grief upon rival guild members regardless of whether there was any provocation.

Due to the amount of quantitative data and qualitative interviews, this research was able to construct a taxonomy of the types of grievers and the reasons they cause grief. Each type of griever has something to gain in addition to pleasure from the disruption to another player through griefing (excluding the first type that only performs griefing for pleasure). The following is a summary of each griever types cause and gain:

- Disruptors cause grief purely for the pleasure they gain from it.
- Advancers cause grief to gain power by progressing in the game by any means.
- Competitors cause grief to gain power by challenging other players.
- Retaliators cause grief to challenge their attackers.
- Vigilantes cause grief to challenge grievers and try to control the situation.
- Elitists cause grief to control the situation the way they want.
- Deceivers cause grief to gain power through virtual wealth by controlling the situation.
- Dominators cause grief to feel powerful by challenging other players and controlling situations.

The taxonomy of griever types created in this thesis expands upon previously created groupings, but also suggests new types of grievers by focusing on why each type causes grief and what they have to gain from their actions. Bartle (2005) previously indicated two types of “Killers”; the implicit killer called the “Griever” and the explicit killer called the “Politician”. Grievers provoke, enjoy attacking other players, and like the idea of a bad reputation. In relation to this thesis, Bartle’s griever mainly shares similarities with the disruptor and dominator, of whom are not afraid of, and embrace a bad reputation. Similarities aside, the dominator of this thesis also wishes to feel powerful from their actions and have control over the situation. Bartle’s politician acts with forethought, can manipulate others subtly and prefer a good reputation. In relation to this thesis, the politician shares similarities with the deceiver in that they manipulate others. However, there was no indication in this thesis’ findings that deceivers prefer a good reputation, other than during the period they are gaining the trust of their mark. Ultimately, the deceiver must reveal themselves upon accomplishment of the deceit, and will most likely lose reputation in the process.

Foo and Koivisto (2004b) defined the griever via the type of griefing they committed. They suggested four types: harassment, power imposition, scamming and greed play.

Harassment is the main theme of griefing, and all eight types listed in the thesis taxonomy are harassing their targets for different reasons. Power imposition is also quite common, with the competitors perhaps gaining the most from imposing their strength upon other players. Scamming is a niche type of griefing; as was found in the analysis of this specific type of griefing, scamming was not very widespread. Scamming is mostly performed by the deceiver. Finally, greed play as defined by Foo and Koivisto relates primarily to the advancer described in this thesis, however the advancer is more complex as some implicitly try to progress without realising their intentional actions are causing harm to others, while others may explicitly progress by griefing anyone in their way to gain virtual wealth.

Rubin and Camm (2013) defined the reasons a player causes grief by distinguishing differences in the varieties of griefing. They suggested six types: intentionality to disrupt, maliciousness, lucrateness, means, deceptiveness, and emotional perception. These six types more closely resemble the thesis taxonomy of griefer types than the previous discussed research. The disruptor described in this thesis definitely has the intentionality to disrupt. The dominator has malicious intentions. Lucrateness is something that the advancer and deceiver look for when selecting their target. Elitists and challengers have the means to grief those they perceive as weak. The deceiver applies deceptive practices on their targets.

Between these three taxonomies (two of which are now over a decade old and often cited), the majority of griefing types are covered, but not with the specificity between the different types of griefing that this thesis was able to produce. The thesis identified precise types that have not been acknowledged before, such as (but not limited to) the two types of griefers that are also the enemy of others griefers, and are more positioned towards the intersector, the retaliator and vigilante.

6.2 Magnitude of Griefing

The purpose of the second sub-question regarding the magnitude of griefing was to identify the pervasiveness and frequency of griefing, as well as toleration levels of griefing among varying individuals, such as the griefers, the grieved, witnesses and intersectors.

This research has not obtained exact values of griefing reports from developers as it would be impossible to collect without support and collaboration from hundreds of MMORPG developers. In addition, only a few companies have released figures giving

an indication of the pervasiveness of the griefing phenomenon, such as 6.5% of *Linden Lab's Second Life* users reporting abuse each month (Chesney et al., 2009), and 25% of *IT Global/Secure's* customer support calls relating to griefing (Alemi, 2007). Most MMORPG companies instead release more positive information such as how they combat griefing, instead of the negativity a griefing report could generate. Without exact figures, this research has instead identified the pervasiveness from a representative sample of MMORPG players.

It was found that approximately one in six to seven players are regularly grieved, and approximately one in twelve players regularly cause grief. "Regular" is in reference to the griefing happening at least half of the time that the player is logged into an MMORPG. There were a lot more respondents that indicated occasional or rare associations to griefing, with only two percent having never been subjected to griefing, and approximately thirty percent having never performed griefing in MMORPGs. In addition to these statistics, the more regular griefers are approximately twice as likely to be male. Only three in ten males have never performed any griefing, compared to a little more than half of the female players. The grieved players consist of almost equal percentages of male and female players in relation to their population.

The most pervasive types of griefing were spamming, verbal harassment, player ganking, corpse spawn camping, ninja looting and kill stealing, with approximately two-thirds to four-fifths of all grieved having been exposed to these at least once, and these types experienced by between one in five and one in ten (depending on the type) of the grieved on a daily basis.

Spamming, the most frequent type of griefing that players were subjected to, was experienced by one in five of the grieved multiple times per day. However, it was the action performed by the least amount of griefers. This indicated strongly that the small percentage of griefers that performed spamming, executed it more regularly than other types of griefing, and additionally exposed many players to it on each occasion. Spamming was also rated at higher intensities than nearly all other types of griefing, with almost half of those exposed to it, rating it at either high or extreme intensity. While not as pervasive, being preyed upon as a new player was similarly rated at high intensities. This type of griefing was not as widespread, as new players or "newbies" only exist until they either gain experience beyond this moniker, or leave the game.

Verbal harassment was the most pervasive among the grieved, having been imposed on four in five players from the survey. According to the grieved, verbal harassment was

also the most intense type of griefing, and witnesses agreed with this. In contrast, player ganking was the most pervasive and frequent type of griefing performed by the respondents, with nearly half of all respondents indicating having performed it at least once, and approximately one in five griefers performing ganking at least once a day. According to the griefers, they felt the most intense griefing types they performed were player ganking, followed by ninja looting. Corpse spawn camping, team disruption, event disruption, and exploiting loopholes were also of high intensity, with one quarter or more of all griefers rating these at either high or extreme. Among all respondents, mob luring and player blocking were the least intense types of griefing.

Role-playing disruption was the least widespread type of griefing with only one in five griefed indicating they had been exposed to it before. However, focusing on only players that preferred role-playing servers, it was found that two-thirds of these players had been exposed to role-play disruption, with nearly one in five of those being subjected daily to disruption of their role-playing.

As the intensity of griefing becomes more extreme, the expectation was that a player could sustain less incidences of griefing before significant emotional or in-game behavioural impact occurs, although the griefers indicated players would be able to sustain more griefing incidences than the griefed indicated. Approximately half of all respondents indicated that a player could only tolerate several isolated incidents of low intensity before implications occur.

6.3 Implications of Griefing

The purpose of the final sub-question regarding the implications of griefing was to identify the impact and consequences of griefing, among varying individuals, such as the griefers, the griefed and intersector. Given the persistent nature of the virtual world MMORPG players inhabit, griefing can have a great impact upon an individual, as they grow attached to their avatar and emotionally engaged in the virtual world (Wolfendale, 2007). The psychological wellbeing of the griefed was a very important component of this research; as already mentioned they were often overlooked in prior research. The wellbeing of these individuals should be just as important to MMORPG developers.

To determine how the well-being of an individual was affected after being subjected to, or after performing griefing, the research focused on the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and the conditions of the respondents' autonomy, competence and relatedness. As discussed in the methodology, autonomy relates to

the players sense of control in the game, competence involves a players feeling of skill and mastering challenges in the game, and relatedness is their feeling of social connectedness in the game's community.

In general, approximately half to two-thirds of all grieved players indicated no change to their conditions of autonomy, competence and relatedness after having been subjected to griefing as opposed to before the griefing incident. However, among the majority of the remaining grieved, all three conditions decreased after they had been subjected to griefing, with the negative impact increasing as the player is more heavily grieved. In contrast, a much larger percentage of the griefers, two-thirds to four-fifths indicated no impact to their conditions of autonomy, competence and relatedness. In addition, among the majority of the remaining griefers, all three conditions increased after they had performed griefing, with the positive outcome increasing as the player performs griefing more regularly.

In particular, the sense of autonomy of the grieved decreased the most, and the interviewed grieved also felt strongly about this; some discussed that they felt they had lost all self-control and were completely helpless. However, there was an indication of an increase in autonomy by a small number of the grieved subjects, and an interviewed grieved player specified they could regain their autonomy through retaliation. In regards to retaliation, nearly two thirds of the grieved showed a desire for vengeance against their attacker. This is a direct result of their SDT conditions being thwarted. Intersectors not only showed a desire for retaliation, but acted upon their desires, with strong indications that a lot of their griefing was due to being grieved themselves.

The sense of relatedness of the grieved decreased almost as much as their autonomy. Some of the interviewed grieved players felt completely outcast, as other players laughed and encouraged the griefing due to the defamation of the player. It was also indicated that they felt a higher need for relatedness after being subjected to griefing, with the need to gravitate towards friendly players. The sense of competence was almost as likely to increase among the grieved as it was to decrease. Some interviewed grieved players explained that they felt less competent as they allowed a griefer to take advantage of them, while others indicated their need for competence had increased in order to stand up their attackers in the future.

As stated, the majority of the griefers felt no impact to their SDT conditions after performing griefing. Those that did indicate a change, overwhelmingly identified that it was an increase to their conditions; very few indicated a negative impact. In particular,

it was mainly the occasional or rare griefers that indicated a decrease to just their relatedness. Interviews revealed that the griefers understood griefing could “burn bridges” in the game’s community, negatively impacting their relatedness.

Nearly two in five griefers specified an increase to their autonomy, three in ten to their competence, and one-quarter specified an increase to their relatedness. The interviewed griefers that cause grief in particular to gain control and/or challenge players (the elitists, vigilantes, retaliators and competitors), were most likely to indicate an increase in autonomy. The elitist griefers’ sense of autonomy increases as they discipline perceived weak players through griefing. The vigilantes’ sense of autonomy increases as they challenge griefers to some of their own behaviour. The retaliators’ sense of autonomy increases as their vengeance is enacted upon a player that grieved them. The competitors’ sense of autonomy increases as they challenge and defeat other players.

The types of griefing which had the most impact on the grieved players’ wellbeing were corpse spawn camping, being preyed upon as a new player, scamming, and exploiting loopholes for which approximately one-third of all grieved indicated a high to extreme impact. In contrast, spamming, mob luring, mob camping, player blocking and kill stealing were all regarded as the least impactful to a grieved player, with two-thirds of the grieved specifying either no impact or just low impact.

Among the interviewed grieved players, corpse spawn camping was considered high impact, as it caused a waste of player time and prevention of their progression. Their autonomy was being impeded, quite often by veteran players with huge advantages over them, and the grieved player quit on occasion, even though they were otherwise enjoying the game. Verbal harassment was also described as high impact as the slander affected the interview subject’s reputation and caused them extreme stress in real-life.

Often the reaction to griefing is either behavioural or emotional. Many grieved players will choose not to ignore the griefer, and instead take action. Some report the player officially through the in-game interface, some will try and communicate with and others will retaliate against the griefer. With no resolution, some grieved players will resort to playing less, or abandoning the game altogether, an unfortunate event for both the player and the developer of the MMORPG. Occasionally a grieved player tries to avoid any future griefing situations, and at the cost of their autonomy they do so by playing the MMORPG in different areas, or decide to play a completely different game.

It should be noted that the emotional implications of griefing were generally felt by the interviewed grieved players to decrease as they became more experienced in the MMORPG genre. This was because they became more aware of griefing, and felt they could control their emotions and deal with griefing in alternate manners. They began to expect griefing as a regular occurrence. Despite this, it was identified that the impact of griefing to the grieved player can have a large variety of effects, especially to a new player. Shock, confusion, frustration, sadness, annoyance, stress, depression, helplessness and distrust are just some of the emotions the grieved players had experienced. Some of the worst emotional implications discussed involved a female resorting to self-harm after sexual and appearance related threats, and severe anxiety in real-life social situations through the distrust of people developed because of extreme griefing in MMORPGs.

6.4 Advice for Developers

As the genre of MMORPGs ages, the business model to earn revenue from an MMORPG has been changing to adjust to player demands. As described in the introduction, subscription based MMORPGs in which a player pays by-the-month are in decline. Free-to-play models utilising an in-game shop (in which players can buy virtual items with real currency) to generate revenue are a growing trend. Obviously both of these models (subscription and in-game purchases), require a healthy population of players to generate income for the MMORPG developer, and to offset expenses such as servers, maintenance, game development, customer support and wages. So not only must there be a healthy player population, but the number of inhabitants must also be maintained or even more desirably, grow. This research has identified and analysed many griefing related concerns that may impact upon an MMORPG's player population and therefore the revenue a developer grosses. Developers and publishers of MMORPGs (and possibly other online games) should be able to use this research to more easily identify griefing problem areas in association with their own products. The research will also assist developers in creating more balanced gaming environments for their audiences, which are less amenable to griefing.

The majority of the grieved players indicated that their desire to play their chosen MMORPG was unaffected by griefing incidences. However, there was still a substantial amount of players (approximately one-fifth on average depending on the type of griefing) that indicated a negative impact on their desire to continue playing. Most of these players would play less (on average one in seven grieved via each type of griefing would play less), some stopped playing temporarily (on average one in 18

stopped temporarily) and a small percentage quit playing altogether (on average one in 75 quit). In particular the most impactful type of griefing to one's desire to play was being preyed upon as a new player. Nearly one-third of the grieved that are preyed upon when they are a new player indicated a negative impact to their desires to continue playing. One in 20 quit the MMORPG they were playing due to this type of griefing. This is a considerable impact for developers as their MMORPGs should feel inviting to new people if they wish to retain players and increase profits. Developers should not only be worried about the players quitting, but also the players playing less or temporarily avoiding their MMORPG as this also impacts their revenue through these players unsubscribing or purchasing less from in-game stores during periods of inactivity. It wasn't only the new players that were playing less due to griefing; other types of griefing that impacted most on the time played were scamming, player ganking, and exploiting loopholes.

Griefing areas identified as higher impact should become the focus of anti-griefing measures. In turn fewer resources should be spent on low impact types of griefing. This statement infers that preying on new players, corpse spawn camping, scamming, player ganking and exploiting loopholes should have the highest priorities when considering how to tackle griefing. However, a fine balance between anti-griefing and interesting (un-exploitable) game mechanics needs to be achieved by developers to create positive gaming experiences for all, as well as cater to the competitive nature of the players. Gaming is very competitive and simply removing the ability for a player to "gank" another player may cause some backlash. Perhaps there needs to be some more thought into how to achieve more positive experiences for every player. Systems such as penalising toxic behaviour and rewarding honourable behaviour have had some success in other genres (more detail below), and may also benefit the MMORPG genre. One interviewed griefer made it clear that some penalties could be a deterrent:

"I have never been a fan of scamming. It depends how high the penalty is. I will obviously will [sic] not do anything that will put my account in jeopardy but if my biggest penalty is losing gear/xp, ill push the limits." (ID: 1058)

Account banning should probably be reserved for serious offences; perhaps other forms of griefing could employ penalties that fit within the bounds of the game, creating immersion for the griefer and the grieved. Alemi's (2007) proposal of a virtual court system for virtual worlds may help alleviate some griefing and give the grieved some justice, similar to the game *ArcheAge* and its player run court system (Archeage Wiki, 2015) that sends convicted offenders to an in-game prison for a specific time related to

their crime. Taylor (2006) also proposed that developers could incorporate participatory design in to their products to create a process of mutual learning between user and developer. Doing so could make MMORPG developers aware of griefing and game exploits, with the users able to suggest designs to govern these. The consumer then becomes more invested when their concerns are being listened to. Perhaps focusing on good behaviour is another way to encourage friendly socialising. *Riot Games* believes so (Bellezza, 2015; Chambers, 2012), and feels that it has had some success in reducing the amount of anti-social behaviour. This is another direction developers of MMORPGs could consider.

Griefing is primarily a player chosen action, but many respondents, both griefer and grieved indicated that some types of griefing are simply due to poor game design or flaws in the game mechanics. Mob camping was the type of griefing most criticised as an action carried out due to poor game design. Players felt trapped in that they had to stalk or search for a particular enemy that held important loot to remain competitive, and if they didn't participate they could fall behind. This interview response summed it up quite well:

"You're encouraged to claim a spot for yourself and/or kill the other player that is there, if you don't chances are you won't get loot. It could be argued, since game's system is like that and encourages this kind of behavior to "win", then these are the rules of the game everyone abides by, and if you don't like it, you don't play the game." (ID: 855)

Also despised primarily by the grieved players as the result of poor game design, were kill stealing and ninja looting. They questioned how after two decades these actions could still even be present in MMORPGs. While some developers have addressed these game design flaws in their own ways (an example of many MMORPGs now allowing kills and loot to be equally shared amongst players), most griefing types are still present and pervasive. Some types are even encouraged to facilitate game lore and immersion. For example, games in which multiple factions engage in combat, player ganking can be expected, but do the game mechanics need to enable repeated killing of the player through corpse camping? Once again, developers need to strike a fine balance between immersive, interesting and restricting game mechanics.

6.5 Guide for the Griefed

As a griefed player, it would be wise to be aware of factors that could enable griefing. The worst case for you as a griefed is a very real negative impact to your conditions of autonomy, competence and relatedness, which can result in a lowered motivation to persist in playing the MMORPG. Impacts to these conditions, as well as emotional impact such as anger, sadness, stress, and confusion, may lead to you quitting the MMORPG, despite the enjoyment you were otherwise having. So understanding griefing will hopefully help to avoid this adverse outcome.

Some factors are in your control and could prevent or reduce the amount of griefing that you experience. Reviewing the behavioural reactions that all of the griefed respondents have taken in the past may provide additional ways to prevent griefing against yourself.

Prevention could involve limiting yourself to “safe” areas in the game, where you know a griefer, or a particular type of griefing cannot be performed or affect you. As a griefed player, know that doing so, may affect your autonomy and sense of volition, as you are restricting yourself. However, if the restriction removes some types of griefing, you may be willing to make that sacrifice. The two most common ways to avoid some of the types of griefing discussed in this thesis would be to either play an MMORPG that has very few to no competitive gameplay mechanics, or to select a Player versus Environment (PvE) server when creating your character(s). PvE servers, while not devoid of griefing, restrict combat between players completely, or allow only consensual combat between players. With these server rules in place, player ganking and corpse camping (two of the six most pervasive and intense types of griefing) cannot be performed upon you. Be aware that verbal harassment, the most frequent, intense, and impactful type of griefing, would still be present and just as pervasive.

If you still wish to play on a Player versus Player (PvP) server, you should be mindful that the server rules usually enable more types of griefing to occur and at more frequent rates. When an MMORPG contains multiple factions, usually the game fosters the rivalry between these factions, and in some areas of the game even encourages combat, regardless of any imbalances. You should stay alert, knowing that you may never be safe in contested areas. For newcomers this may be a daunting prospect, but some also find it interesting and exhilarating, or, after some time and experience with MMORPGs have learned to accept that griefing is inevitable. For added protection you may try playing the game with real-life friends you can trust. While enjoying the co-

operative gameplay of an MMORPG, being in a group may also dissuade a griefer from taking actions against you.

When you are subjected to griefing, it is advisable to not try to communicate the injustice with the griefer. The analysis indicated that many griefers enjoy when their target reacts to provocation, giving them additional fuel and motivation to continue griefing. Instead, as a grieved player, you should use tools provided by the game developers to:

- Report the offender;
- in cases of verbal harassment, trolling and spamming (which analysis indicated was extremely common), select the option (that the majority of MMORPGs have) to place the offender on an “ignore list”. Regardless of what the griefer does afterwards, you will never see it in the chat channels or private messages;
- in cases of team disruption, you may be able to “vote” the offender out of your team;

Another reaction you may take is retaliation against your griefer. Some respondents reported that doing so reversed their declining autonomy, and that they felt in control again. In addition, if their retaliation was successful, they felt more competent. However, much like trying to communicate with the griefer, retaliation may in turn incite the griefer further, making you a personal enemy of that griefer. Also through retaliation, you may be perceived as a griefer yourself.

Lastly, as one respondent put it:

“It’s just a game; if it stops being fun, do something else.” (ID: 659)

Ultimately, MMORPGs are just a game. Games are supposed to be fun, relaxing, and immersive enough to give some escape from real-life. If it is not fulfilling what you want from a game, and you cannot find a solution to the griefing, perhaps you should find another game. Hopefully this research gives you the awareness of griefing that you need to avoid this least desirable outcome.

6.6 Future Research Recommendations

This research identified at the beginning of data analysis that the demographics of the respondents were representative of the MMORPG community. However, the analysis of results in Chapter Four identified several demographic minorities whose experience

of griefing differed substantially from the average player. This was mostly in terms of the increases in the frequency, intensity or impact of griefing. As the sample size for many of these subgroups were quite small, the results obtained are indicative rather than conclusive. Therefore future research focusing specifically on the experiences of these minorities would be of value. The minorities referred to would be female players, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender players, and ethnicities other than Caucasian

Another minority not related to the demographics of the respondent, but association to griefing was the proposed intersector. The intersector is one that causes as much grief as they receive and does so quite regularly. This particular group was very interesting and it seems their motivation to grief is primarily in retaliation; hence griefers are creating more griefers. To focus on these particular individuals would make for a very fascinating study.

This research established definitions for 15 specific types of griefing identified from previous research. The definitions for these actions provided to the research participants were fashioned from literature and MMORPG forum discussion. These definitions were concise and thought of as complete. However, several respondents suggested additional types of griefing that could quite comfortably fit as sub-types under the umbrella of one of those 15 types of actions. Due to this, the definitions were updated to reflect all additional sub-types of actions, such as a player electing to perform a role they are incapable of fitting as a sub-type of team disruption.

Numerous respondents submitted additional types of actions that they believed to be griefing that did not relate to any of the previously identified 15 actions. While respondents identified sixteen additional types, many of them had similarities and through thematic analysis were reduced to three new categories with the sixteen split between these three as sub-types. These three new categories (or types of griefing) were “Trolling”, “Exercise of Power”, and “Cheating”. Initially trolling was considered to be a part of verbal harassment, but trolling can be much more than verbal abuse and so it was separated as a new type. The recommendation would be for new studies to consider using the expanded definitions of each type of griefing, as well as including the additional three types of griefing and their provided definitions (from section 5.1.1.1) if they want to cover all types of griefing that players have experienced.

Griefing areas identified as higher impact (such as preying on new players, corpse spawn camping, scamming, player ganking and exploiting loopholes) should have a greater focus in anti-griefing research. Furthermore, there were a few types of griefing (mob camping, kill stealing, and ninja looting) that were considered primarily as an

issue of game design, and this was reflected in the fact that many respondents felt these actions were not truly griefing. If they are not griefing, what are they? Interviewees indicated they were parts of the game that they can either participate in or fall behind competitively. Future research could focus on areas of poor game design that facilitates and encourages griefing.

It is also recommended that more research is conducted regarding virtual laws or systems that virtual worlds could adopt in order to punish or reward particular player behaviours. The personal thought of this thesis' author is that penalties and rewards should fit within the lore and atmosphere of the virtual world to encourage immersion. Perhaps griefers could still be a part of the game, but do so at their own risk. Game mechanics could be utilised to facilitate ways to deal with griefers fairly. For example a system could allow the grieved to set bounties on their attackers in relation to the seriousness of each offence, and vigilantes could take up the role of bounty hunter. Another example are player run justice systems that are already making an appearance in (very few) games. The hurdle would be ensuring that the systems are fair for all players and exempt from abuse itself. The author has seen firsthand how a system such as voting a player out of a group for griefing can be successful (see Appendix A), but also understands that such systems could be used by griefers to abuse innocent players.

Appendices

Appendix A: An Observational Journey

This section is an informal observational journey through the MMORPG titled *World of Warcraft*. The author began the game from the beginning, at character creation and levelled their avatar all the way to the maximum level of 90, which took them through content of all four expansion packs; *The Burning Crusade*, *Wrath of the Lich King*, *Cataclysm* and the latest expansion, *Mists of Pandaria* (at the time of writing; note that there is now a more recent expansion *Warlords of Draenor* that was not available during this journey). It is written from the first person perspective of the author of the thesis, and the intention is to inform the reader of any incidences of griefing witnessed within this long-running successful MMORPG.

It must be noted that the author is a relatively experienced MMORPG player, having played multiple MMORPGs within the last eleven years, including (but not limited to) *World of Warcraft*, *EverQuest II*, *Star Wars: The Old Republic*, *Age of Conan*, *Elder Scrolls Online*, *ArcheAge*, *Guild Wars* and *Guild Wars II*. From experience the author was not handicapped by regular barriers to entry such as complex game systems and user interfaces, and was able to adapt to new experiences fairly quickly. All names have been replaced by made up or generic names.

A.1 Newbie

After installation of the massive game that takes up 25 gigabytes of hard drive space, I ran the game file and logged in to my account. As I had previously played *World of Warcraft* (or WoW for short) I decided to try out the new race that players could pick as their avatar in the expansion *Mists of Pandaria* (MoP). This new race is a humanoid version of a Chinese Panda, and is called *Pandaren*. With Pandaren chosen as my avatar's race, next was to choose a gender. In this instance I choose a female Pandaren to see if it affected any future incidents, and experimented with a few customisations such as hair style and fur colour until I was happy with my choice. Next I had to select a class.

Your chosen class represents what your character will be capable of performing during combat; a priest can cast spells of healing or to smite their foes, while a warrior can wade forward through enemies wearing full plate armour and wielding double handed weapons. This is just a brief introduction to these two classes, but in the case of my class for this new character, I once again picked the new option available with MoP, the

Monk. The monk is capable of dispatching enemies through martial arts or utilising mystical chi to provide innate defences or healing depending on how you develop your monk. Finally I had to represent a WoW faction, the Alliance or the Horde. While factions in WoW are more sophisticated than simple 'Good versus Evil', I chose the Horde that is generally considered to be the 'Evil' faction, made up of races such as orcs, trolls, undead, and goblins. The Alliance has more traditional "good" fantasy flavoured races such as humans, night elves, dwarves and gnomes. These factions have unique stories and game content, and often end up in battles against one another during the course of the game. I hit the 'Accept' button on my newly defined character and the game began.

A.1.1 Level 1-10

My Pandaren Monk entered the world, with a Chinese styled name to suit the race and class, 'Ling'. In the starting zone for Pandaren characters, *The Wandering Isle*; temples, lush forests, and wise old meditative Pandaren, set the scene for a uniquely (for WoW) Chinese inspired zone.

During my time in *The Wandering Isles* I encountered many other players that generally kept to themselves, appearing to be content on progressing beyond the starting area. There is no form of Player versus Player (PvP) combat on the isle, and every player is faction-less until leaving the isle to support the faction they chose during character creation. It seemed there was little opportunity for griefing, as much of the game is locked away and the player is restricted to the isle until completing a set of tasks by around level 10.

Occasionally I would encounter a player that was killing all the enemies that I was tasked to defeat, hindering my progress, but due to this game design I had no option but to wait for enemies to respawn (re-appear in the game world), or try to beat the other player to the punch. A third option would be to band together in a 'party' to accomplish goals together, but at this early stage random players tend to favour progressing individually and autonomously.

A.1.2 Level 10-20

Leaving *The Wandering Isles* and joining the Horde in their capital city *Orgrimmar* finally opened the wider world to me. Here is where you can see what *Massively Multiplayer* really means, with large amounts of players congregating in the capital city; trading items, bidding on auctions, conducting friendly duels, and many other actions available in the game. It was here where I saw my first case of griefing, known as

ganking. Ganking refers to when a player intentionally kills another player that is at a severe disadvantage with no hope for victory.

I was leaving the capital city of *Orgrimmar* to embark on a series of adventures in the early levelling zone *Northern Barrens* (via *Durotar*). At the entrance gates to *Orgrimmar* many players engage in friendly combat duels. In this game and many MMORPGs, a player reduced to zero hit points (HP) will die. However, with the duel mechanics, the fight will last until one player is reduced to 1 remaining HP, at which point they are considered defeated. This allows the player to continue to play without any death penalties and is a rather friendly contest of skill. I was watching some players duel and one player claimed victory over the other. The defeated player said, "good one" to the victorious player, but before they could sit and rest to reclaim their HP, an Alliance rogue appeared behind him and backstabbed him to death in one blow.

A rogue is a class that excels at high melee damage, with the ability to remain invisible with a class ability called 'stealth' until desired or they perform an attack. In this case the Alliance rogue was nearby in stealth mode waiting for opportunity. Once they had performed the killing blow revealing themselves, they reverted back in to stealth as quickly as it happened. Stunned Horde players in the vicinity started a manhunt searching for the Alliance player called 'Wicked' shooting off magic and swinging wildly in attempt to reveal the hiding rogue but without result.

After a few minutes duels resumed and one match ended with a victor that was barely alive himself. Once again the rogue 'Wicked' appeared out of nowhere and performed an area attack that shredded both the defeated player and the victor to death. The Alliance rogue performed a series of in-game emotes (that appear in the chat channel to all nearby players) rubbing salt in the wound as they once again vanished from sight:

Wicked gloat's over Moomoo's misfortune.

Wicked gloat's over Moomoo's misfortune.

Wicked gloat's over Moomoo's misfortune.

Wicked gloat's over Moomoo's misfortune.

This time a Horde mage was quick to respond and casted an area effect damaging spell that injured the rogue back into visibility for all Horde to see. The group of Horde players present rushed in and slaughtered the Alliance rogue. This is a snippet from the various emotes and speech in the chat channel that followed:

Moomoo spit's on Wicked.

[Moomoo]: What a fucking asshole.

[Miniwar]: Yea fucking grieving prick.

From my perspective as a witness, the Alliance rogue was having fun killing players from the opposing faction. However I could tell that generally most of the opposing faction in the area was annoyed that someone was interrupting their friendly contests, especially those on the end of the receiving blade.

Moving on, I was almost ready to enter *Northern Barrens* when I read over the *Durotar* zone wide chat:

[1. General] [Moomoo]: He is back again...backstabbed me...

Entering *Northern Barrens*, I fully expected some chat related harassment to occur during my time there. Back before the expansion *Cataclysm*, this zone was famously known for its colourful conversations due to many players converging to level from level 10 to 20 across a large barren landscape. On the WoW Wikipedia website it quotes,

Barrens chat is like a stupid centrifuge, distilling the unexpurgated banal thoughts of a thousand morons into a hardened impenetrable lump of smacktardery, spilling endlessly across the bottom of your screen. (WoW Wiki, 2014)

However, since *Cataclysm*, the land was divided into northern and southern zones with not so bleak a landscape, and many other areas and ways for Horde players to level. My time in barrens was relatively uneventful and I made it to level 20 in peace.

A.2 Leveller

A.2.1 Level 20-60

These levels cover content of the original two continents of WoW.

Early on I decided to specialise my Monk as a 'tank'. In many MMORPG's (WoW included) the co-operative nature of the game is built around the concept of 'the holy trinity'. The holy trinity is what players use to describe the three common roles for players in Player versus Environment (PvE) content. These roles are:

1. The Tank - The player that will guard and defend all other players, trying to gain the attention of enemies to attack them and only them, and soaking up as much

of the damage as possible. Usually this player takes the lead role and guides the group through the PvE content.

2. The DPS (or sometimes known as damage dealers) - an acronym for damage per second. These players are tasked with dealing the damage to enemies while the tank holds the enemy's attention. They don't usually have many ways to defend themselves, relying on the tank to soak up most of the damage.
3. The Healer - This player's primary concern is to keep the group alive through the use of healing abilities. Most of their healing focus should be on the tank player, as if they die, the relatively defenceless remaining players won't last long.

The concludes the holy trinity, but sometimes other roles are used in MMORPGs, such as the support; that can bestow beneficial enchantments on allies and/or curse enemies; and the mezzor which can mesmerise enemies in different ways to take them out of the fight.

Returning to my Monk, I specialised as a 'Brewmaster' which is a tank specialisation, and started joining groups for instanced PvE dungeons (servers that separate your group from the rest of the world). Groups in general expected the tank to lead them through the dungeon as the tank must initiate the combat in order to gain the attention (or threat as it is known) of the enemies. Having never played as a Horde character before, the early Horde dungeons were relatively new to me. So at times I would ask my group,

[Party] [Ling]: Which way now?

Generally the reply was friendly and helpful. But sometimes the reply would be something such as:

[Party] [Meatcleaver]: Really?? What a n00b!
[Party] [Wiseguy]: Get a clue.
Flynt is terribly bored with Ling.
[Party] [Doctordeath]: ...wtf just look at your map fucking idiot.

(n00b = new player, usually derogatory)

(What the Fuck)

It could be frustrating knowing it was my job to protect these people that have just

thrown random verbal abuse at me for a simple question, but I kept going and completed the dungeon.

At level 30 I gained the ability to specialise in a second role for my Monk. So for my second specialisation I picked the 'Mistweaver', which is a healing specialisation. I was now able to change my specialisation between tank and healer at will. Playing as a healer in a group dungeon changed the dynamics in that I was able to follow the tank around and no one expected anything from me except to heal. Occasional frustration could occur though when you team up with a tank incapable of performing their role. The tank's job, through various uses of abilities is to always keep themselves as the largest threat of the enemies, but if the tank isn't performing well, the enemies may instead see the highest damage dealer or the healer as the real threat and quickly strike them down. It can be very frustrating when this occurs.

Return trips to the capital city *Orgrimmar* also resulted in seeing some ugly types of spamming in the trade chat channels. There was an ongoing joke that I saw on a multiple occasions during levelling in the chat channel, in which a player would say the word "Anal" followed by a link to one of their abilities, achievements, and/or quests for example. Here are some actual examples:

[2. Trade] [Player1]: Anal [Rupture]

[2. Trade] [Player2]: Anal [For the Children]

[2. Trade] [Player3]: Anal [Professional Grand Master]

[2. Trade] [Player4]: STFU!

(Shut the Fuck Up)

[2. Trade] [Player3]: Anal [Dangerous Love]

[2. Trade] [Player4]: OMG im tryin to trade!

(Oh My God)

[2. Trade] [Player4]: WTS [Enchanting]

(Want to Sell)

[2. Trade] [Player1]: Anal [Enchanting]!!!

This spamming in the trade channel continued for as long as I remained in the city on certain occasions. Players wanting to trade items were getting aggravated by the spamming interrupting their notices of sale. Other players not even trying to trade anything were also getting irritated that their chat interface was filling with nonsensical gibberish.

Back out in the world again there were common episodes such as described earlier where many players are tasked with killing the same enemies. Once again it felt like a possible game design flaw when you are forced to compete with an allied faction player

to kill similar enemies. Even worse is when you are forced to compete for resources in the game world. There were moments when I would discover ore to mine (which could be used to craft items, or sell to other players), but in order to obtain the ore I would have to fight my way through multiple enemies. This is fine, but what is not fine is when you spend all that effort to obtain the ore, and an allied faction player walks in and takes the ore while you are still engaged in combat. They are stealing your hard worked for resources and so this could be considered a form of 'Ninja Looting'. When an opposing faction player swoops in to steal the resource at least you can engage in combat with them to compete for the resource if you desire.

A.2.2 Level 60-85

Reaching level 60 was the original level cap milestone when the game was first released. With each expansion this level cap was increased. This section will cover the content of the continent *Outlands* from *The Burning Crusade* expansion pack, *Northrend* from *Wrath of the Lich King* expansion, and various content unlocked from the *Cataclysm* expansion from levels 60 until 85.

Upon reaching level 60 I was tasked with entering *The Dark Portal* that teleports me to *Hellfire Peninsula* located in the *Outlands*. This is where the adventure continues for level 60 players. This seemed like an easy task, right? Wrong. I arrived in *The Blasted Lands* where *The Dark Portal* was located and rode my horse towards the portal. It seemed the area next to *The Dark Portal* was a common camping ground for max level players. They knew that anyone intent on progressing past the first world into *Outlands* would have to pass through this area. It's the equivalent of a gang of bandits holding the only passable bridge hostage to travellers. Needless to say I was killed for sport before I could enter the portal. Upon returning to my corpse as a ghost (wasting my time and incurring a death penalty) I re-spawned to make a rush for the portal, only to be killed again. There were maybe 3 or 4 Alliance members 'camping' the path to the portal, and now camping around my corpse. In my next attempt I managed to re-spawn inside a tent, slightly hidden. When my corpse disappeared the alliance knew I had re-spawned and started a search for me. At the best opportunity I made a run for it and crossed the portal's glowing threshold. I made it to *Hellfire Peninsula*. I was now safe...or was I?

The frustration of a higher level player corpse (or spawn) camping me and not allowing me to proceed was pretty high to say the least. I had no hope of retaliation or defending myself as the level difference meant my attacks would be like hitting a person with a toothpick, whereas their attacks could kill me in one blow. The frustration was not to

end, as it turned out that *Hellfire Peninsula* was another location in which high level players seemed to enjoy extremely unbalanced fights against low level players. It seemed everywhere I went in this area a level 90 Alliance player would fly down on a dragon, gryphon, or some other creature, dismount and pummel me. My progress halted dramatically, and I couldn't escape these players as they had much faster flying mounts than were available to me at level 60. I'm not sure why *Hellfire Peninsula* seemed to be a favourite area to these players, but I assume it was to do with the fact that all level 60 players are funnelled in to this new continent via this one zone, whereas before in the 1-60 level continent there are multiple areas to level in.

With my progress hindered, I decided to pursue a new avenue to level: player versus player (PvP) battlegrounds. These battlegrounds are instanced areas with a balanced amount of players per faction of similar levels participating and competing in the goals of the battleground. This was a good way to gain experience points to level, while *Hellfire Peninsula* remained bombarded by ganking and corpse camping. Note that each faction has their own chat channel and cannot speak to the opposing faction. During my time in PvP battlegrounds the fighting mostly appeared fair between factions, winning some and losing some. During a win, most players encouraged each other in the chat channel cheering with excitement. However, when we were obviously losing, players started blaming each other, yelling at particular people for 'sucking', and other hostile remarks. This makes me recall a particular incident in the battleground *Alterac Valley* that happened to me back in about 2004 when there were no expansion packs and the level cap was 60. This was on my first character I played in WoW.

I was on the receiving end of some hostility in the chat channel because I 'fucked up'. I had joined a large group of regular *Alterac Valley* players, who were extremely well disciplined in achieving the ultimate victory of destroying all towers, commanders and so forth of the opposing faction, without loss of any of their own. This type of win garnered the most points. We were near the enemy's final position and would soon defeat them with no loss, when I thought I was doing the right thing claiming their final graveyard. This however was not part of my team's strategy. A graveyard acts as a position to re-spawn after dying in battlegrounds. When I claimed the final graveyard the enemy had no graveyards left to spawn at. This forced the enemy to re-spawn in the map starting location, which allowed the enemy to wander out into the battleground and destroy some of our towers. My group were furious over chat:

[Raid Leader] [Player1]: Who the fuck took the graveyard!?
[Raid] [Player2]: Dunno
[Raid] [Player3]: I saw it was Ling
[Raid Leader] [Player1]: Fucking waste of points!
[Raid Leader] [Player1]: Can't you follow simple instructions! GTFO
[Raid] [Player3]: There goes our flawless victory
Ling has left the raid group.
[1. General] [Player1]: Loser....sigh noobs ruin everything

I wasn't actually Ling in this case. Name used for story's sake.

(Get The Fuck Out)

As you can see I left the group after I was singled out, but the abuse continued in the general chat. These days battlegrounds are a little different in that everyone inside the battleground is automatically added to the same group, back then the groups were self-made, so I left the group (but not the battleground) to try to avoid more verbal abuse. After it continued I eventually left the battleground.

Mixing up PvP with some more instanced PvE dungeons felt like a good way to progress past *Hellfire Peninsula* and beyond. The instanced nature of battlegrounds and dungeons took you out of the world and into your own little pocket of space in which the griefers could not target you. However, it also had the effect of taking away the *massively multiplayer* feel, as battlegrounds capped at 40 versus 40 players, and dungeons were five player co-operative groups.

While levelling in multiple dungeons I came across one incident of abuse directed from tank to one of the damage dealers. The group had just defeated a 'boss' enemy (A 'boss' has greater strengths than standard foes and requires group tactics to overcome. These bosses drop valuable loot), which dropped a good ring with attributes suited to tanking. One DPS in the group acquired the loot instead of the tank, who decided to unleash his rage upon this player:

Damageman receives loot: [Mok'Nathal Clan Ring]
[Party] [Tank]: THE HELL U TAKING MY LOOT!?
[Party] [Tank]: U CANT DPS FOR CRAP THEN U
STEAL MY LOOT!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
[Party] [Damageman]: Huh? I can use it
[Party] [Tank]: u fucking retard, its got ARMOR
stats on it, its for tanking!
[Party] [Ling]: Calm down, its just a ring. Just give
it to him Damageman, save the hassle.
[Party] [Tank]: Your mom buy u your account? u
have nfi

(No Fucking Idea)

The tank then decided to rush in to multiple groups of enemies (too many to handle), drag them back to the group and let us all be killed.

[Party] [Tank]: Have fun with the ninja lootwhore
kthxbye
Tank has left the party.
[Party] [Ling]: Ok.....that was different. Was just a
ring he would probably upgrade from in the next
dungeon...

(Okay, thanks, bye)

I didn't understand why the tank took it to the extreme of disrupting the entire group. If they had just asked nicely stating that the ring was more suitable for their role, the DPS player may have handed it over to them. Instead the tank got us all killed and then abandoned the group.

I kept rotating between battlegrounds, dungeons, and the standard worlds, levelling through content of each expansion. Occasionally I would encounter players getting angry or upset over similar occurrences to earlier incidents, some minor and some that felt overboard. I also came across Alliance players that would gain the drop on me, attacking while I was engaged in combat. As long as they were of equivalent levels I felt this was fair game and if they got the upper hand and killed me, I would usually revive safely and attempt to retaliate against them. It was healthy competition.

Rarely, I would return to the capital city *Orgrimmar* to conduct business of selling items I had acquired. On one occasion there was a scam going on that I had seen before

near a busy section of the city. This scam was a player run casino. There is a function in WoW that you type into the chat channel to produce a random number; /roll or /random. Using /roll 100 or /random 100 would output a random number from 1 to 100 in the chat channel. The scam went as follows:

[Winner] yells: COME ALL WIN BIG AT WINNERS CASINO!

[2. Trade] [Player1]: Oh god, a new casino popped up.

[Winner] yells: Roll a random number

[Winner] yells: Roll 100 = 5 x your bet!

[Winner] yells: 95-99 = 3 x your bet

[Winner] yells: 90-94 = 2 x your bet

[Winner] yells: 85-89 = 1.5 x your bet

[Winner] yells: 75-84 = win your bet back

[2. Trade] [Player2]: Don't do it, I bet 100g, rolled 96 (g = Gold)
and he wouldn't pay up.

[2. Trade] [Player1]: lol, you gave him gold? It's (Laughs Out Loud)
your own fault for being stupid.

Many players were sucked in; I could see the rolls in the chat interface. Even if the scammer decided to pay up, the odds were hugely against the gambler, and self-made gambling and casinos are against WoW's Terms of Service. Each of the players could be banned.

A.2.3 Level 85-90

Travelling to the newest continent available in WoW was the start of the final stretch of levelling. This section covers the current expansion *Mists of Pandaria* (at the time of writing; in November of 2014 a new expansion called *Warlords of Draenor* was released and now allows a level cap of 100) and the content in the continent *Pandaria*. By this point I had almost all of the abilities offered to my monk, and with just five more levels nearly all content would be unlocked (or at least the prerequisites for even harder content).

Similar to *The Burning Crusade* area called *Hellfire Peninsula*, both factions started their journey in *Pandaria* in the same zone, *The Jade Forest*. Unlike *The Burning Crusade*, the factions were relatively far apart and would not encounter each other for

some time, allowing each faction some sense of safety from the other while levelling. Although this area was more populated with players completing new content, it was somewhat easy to progress with little to no interruption.

It wasn't until I moved on to the next area in *Pandaria* called *Valley of the Four Winds*, that I started encountering some griefing. Both factions follow the NPCs (Non Player Characters – computer controlled characters) *Li Li* and *Chen Stormscout* through their adventures in this farming and beer brewing land. While it has a great story and interesting characters, both factions perform the same tasks and follow this same story. Generally this is fine and the competitive nature of the factions kicks in at points between players. However, sometimes it also allows players with very geared avatars to seek out opposite faction players to kill somewhat effortlessly. With less distinction between the levels of an level 86 player entering this area, and a level 90 player attempting to kill them, the odds are not as overwhelming as previous areas versus a level 90 player, but it is still extremely in the favour of the level 90 player, and their increased damage and health.

I was travelling within a busy town called *Halfhill*, in which players can get their own plot of land to perform the growing and harvesting of crops. The way the game mechanics work in order to deliver a plot of land to every player, is what the developers call phasing. When a player enters the farm area, they switch into their own phase of the farm, in which they only see the progress of the crops they have made, while other players are in their own phase tending their own crops. Some players were using the phasing as a means of griefing.

In towns you are protected by NPC town guards. This does not mean that the enemy players can't attack you, but should they attempt to, the guards chase them down to their death unless they manage to escape. What better place to escape to, than the phase of your own farm? During my first visit to *Halfhill* an Alliance Paladin player was attacking Horde players of a lower level than themselves and when the guards responded he would enter his farm. I got attacked by this Paladin as well, and on a few occasions killed. I saw the Paladin run towards the farm and disappear. They had entered their own phase of the farm where none of us, including the guards existed. In their phase they were able to recuperate and step back out into the town leaving their phase, and performing the same dirty deeds. It wasn't until he had disrupted multiple Horde players that we all ganged up into a group (myself included), waited in our own farm phases for this player to harass another player then all lunged forward to attack. We eventually killed the player but not without losses, and the guards finished us off, but it was worth

it, to see the Paladin call his dragon and take off in some other direction. I was part of a mob, and it was kind of fun. After all, people had been ganking me all along.

In the next area I visited in *Pandaria* called *Kun-Lai Summit* at around level 87 to 88, there was a place called the *Temple of the White Tiger* in which some of the NPC faction leaders of both the Horde and Alliance were negotiating with the *Pandarian* gods as part of the story. A friend I was grouped with and I entered the temple where there was an Alliance player speaking to their leader. We began our own quest with our own leader in which at one point the *Pandarian* god *Xuen* was speaking to *Anduin Wrynn* of the Alliance (an NPC scripted in the quest).

Xuen says: It is decided. I will open the gates. The Vale of Eternal Blossoms will be open for all.

Anduin Wrynn says: Thank you, Master White Tiger. You will see. I believe that my people - and the Horde - are essentially good.

[Party] [Friend]: Yeah the horde is essentially good!

Xuen says: I will consult the others. Meet me at the gates.

[Party] [Friend]: Watch this!

My friend thought the statement that “the Horde are essentially good” was funny, and turned towards the unsuspecting Alliance player who was in the middle of the conversation, and charged towards them, axe flying. Moments later, the alliance player realised he was in trouble and began to defend himself. Being in a group with my friend I joined in to defeat the alliance quickly. My friend spoke:

[Party] [Friend]: Yeah we are real good lol.

(Laughs Out Loud)

[Party] [Ling]: Poor guy...

Once again, this time without provocation, I was attacking the other faction in a group. Was I part of the griefing problem? On this side of the griefing it felt more like some sort of faction war, and the game allowed it so why shouldn't I do this? My friend and I did not stick around to intentionally disrupt the Alliance player after this one incidence, which I thought was fair.

Reaching level 88 allowed me access to some areas which max level characters frequent for their own adventures. At this point in the game there was about a fifty-fifty chance that an opposing faction player would attack me as I believe that now I was ‘fair

game'. In general it felt fair too, after all these factions were at war and my opposition were only within a few levels difference at most. The rest of the levelling continued like this and I finally reached the level cap, 90.

A.3 Endgame

Levelling your character to max level may be the end of one journey, but it is the beginning of the next journey; the endgame. Many MMORPGs have varying amounts of endgame content in order to satisfy the desire to continue playing. In WoW, endgame consists of participating in content that upgrades your gear in order to become stronger. You can take on PvE or PvP content, with each having separate rewards to enhance your character.

A.3.1 Level 90 PvE

One of the first types of endgame I began partaking in, was something I was familiar with; the instanced dungeons with five players working co-operatively to defeat NPC bosses to gain loot. Being a newly level 90 character is a big difference to a veteran level 90 character. The difference in gear is quite large in scale of damage or healing output. In other words, (still as a monk healer) my healing output was quite low to begin with at endgame and I would have to work harder to keep everyone alive as well as using more resources (such as mana points to cast spells) more quickly.

Not long after reaching level 90 I joined a dungeon group in which the tank was quite geared up, meaning they would have an easier time holding enemy's threat, and also better armour and a larger health pool to soak up damage. With this in mind the tank was pacing the group a lot faster than normal, attacking multiple groups of enemies at a time. I was having trouble keeping up the required healing, and running out of resources. After defeating one group the tank would move on to a few more, meanwhile I was resting further back to replenish my mana (needed for healing spells). The tank had to use his emergency abilities and a health potion just to survive, and I still had not caught back up.

[Party] [Tank]: heals

[Party] [Tank]: keep up

[Party] [Ling]: I'm trying.

[Party] [Tank]: i nearly died

[Party] [Tank]: l2p or reroll

[Party] [Ling]: You ran to next group while I had no mana! You can at least wait until I'm ready!

[Party] [Tank]: manage your mana better

(Learn to Play)

(reroll = play a different class or role. Implied: "cause you are no good at this one")

After this the tank charges in to the first boss battle, with the majority of the group at half health, and my monk only at half mana. With great struggle I manage to keep the group alive for about half of the fight at which point the tank dies. A damage dealer switches to a tanking stance and takes over duties of the tank for the remainder of the fight. While difficult, we ended with a successful outcome. The tank that died began insulting me:

[Party] [Tank]: omg fail

[Party] [Tank]: worst healer

[Party] [Damagetotank]: hey its ok, it worked out fine.

[Party] [Ling]: Yeah pls don't rush in until I'm ready.

[Party] [Tank]: you will never be ready, srsly go reroll.

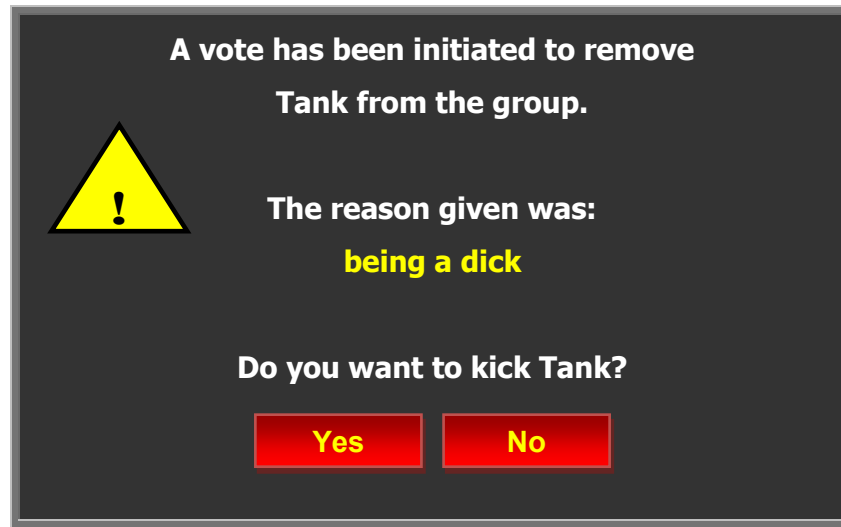
(Oh my God)

(Please)

(Seriously)

(reroll = play a different class/role)

After that I got a popup window on my screen:



One of the players had initiated a vote to kick the tank harassing me. I would be lying if I didn't say I enjoyed voting "Yes". The game system quickly replaced the tank with another, and we smoothly progressed through the rest of the dungeon.

After much progress through the endgame content, I was joining and completing raid instances. These 'raids' are similar to standard instanced dungeons in that a group of players co-operate in defeating the denizens of the area and sharing the spoils. The difference in the raids I was joining through the built-in game queuing system, was that 20 players worked together instead of a standard five. This results in more complex strategies to defeat the opponents and gain better loot. The problem with the queuing system over forming your own group with friends is that you don't know who your team will be and any one of them could be disruptive to the group. The chances of these griefers joining your team increase when the group is made up of 20 players. So it happened to me on multiple occasions in the raid known as *The Throne of Thunder*.

After queuing for *The Throne of Thunder* raid instance for about 20 minutes I made my way to the front of the queue and was placed inside the instance with a fresh team. The group started preparations; placing strengthening spells on one another, summoning minions to help in combat, and laying down feasts which gave every player a boost to their attributes that ate it. Meanwhile one of our teammates had rushed forward into several groups of enemies and returned to us with a swarm of monsters in tow. Without preparations complete, and more than half of the group not ready to begin, the enemies swiftly defeated us. We had been intentionally killed.

Most of our raid group was quite angry, and returned to the instance at low health and mana (as you do after being defeated). The culprit was not pinpointed at that stage and went forth to do the same thing again. This time the group was cautious of another disruption, but still not ready after the previous death. Most of us managed to escape through the entrance portal to the raid instance, with only a handful dying this time. Like the earlier incident I received a popup on-screen about voting to kick the identified offender from the group. The vote passed easily and we went on without trouble.

This kind of team disruption seemed to pop up more and more as the content started to get older. For example, when *The Throne of Thunder* content was new, I had not seen this type of griefing occur; players were trying to enjoy the new content. After the content had been out for a while, this griefing started happening more often, as though players were bored and wanted a laugh.

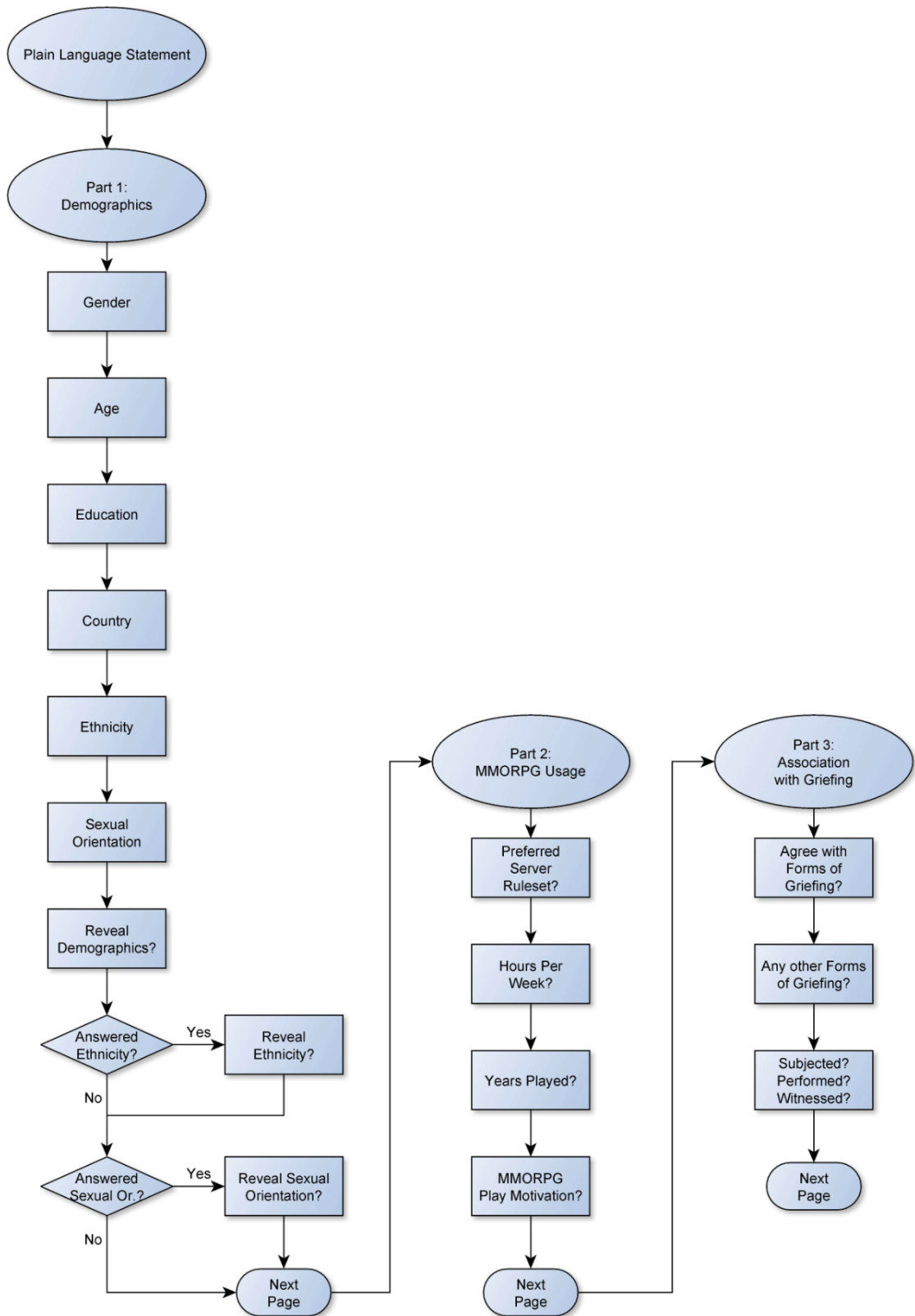
A.3.2 Level 90 PvP

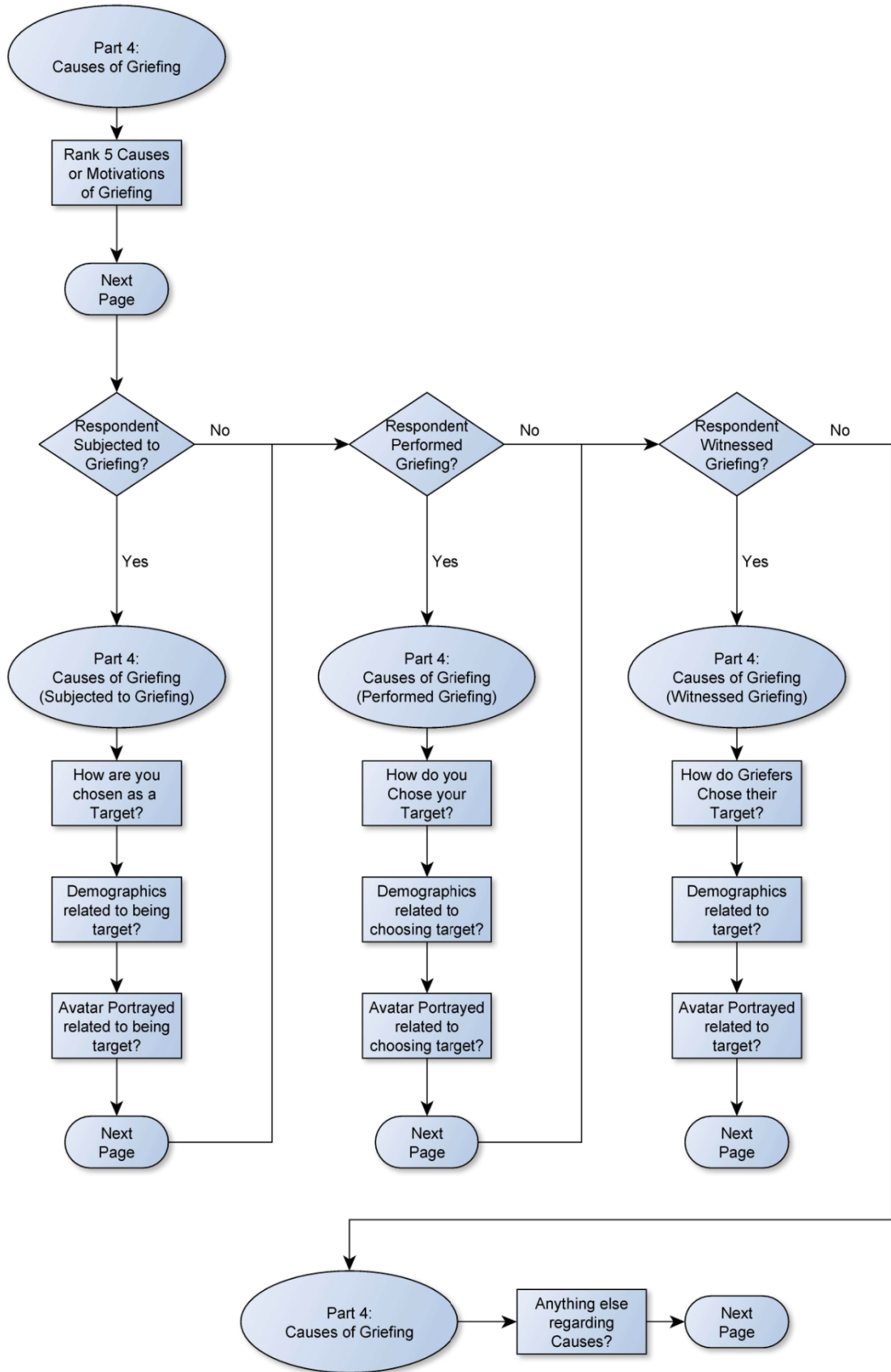
In WoW, as earlier discussed, most of the PvP is centred in instanced battlegrounds. There are also arenas to pit two versus two, three versus three, or five versus five players against each other. So generally, most PvP is structured in instanced areas separated from the rest of the world, in which players consensually participate.

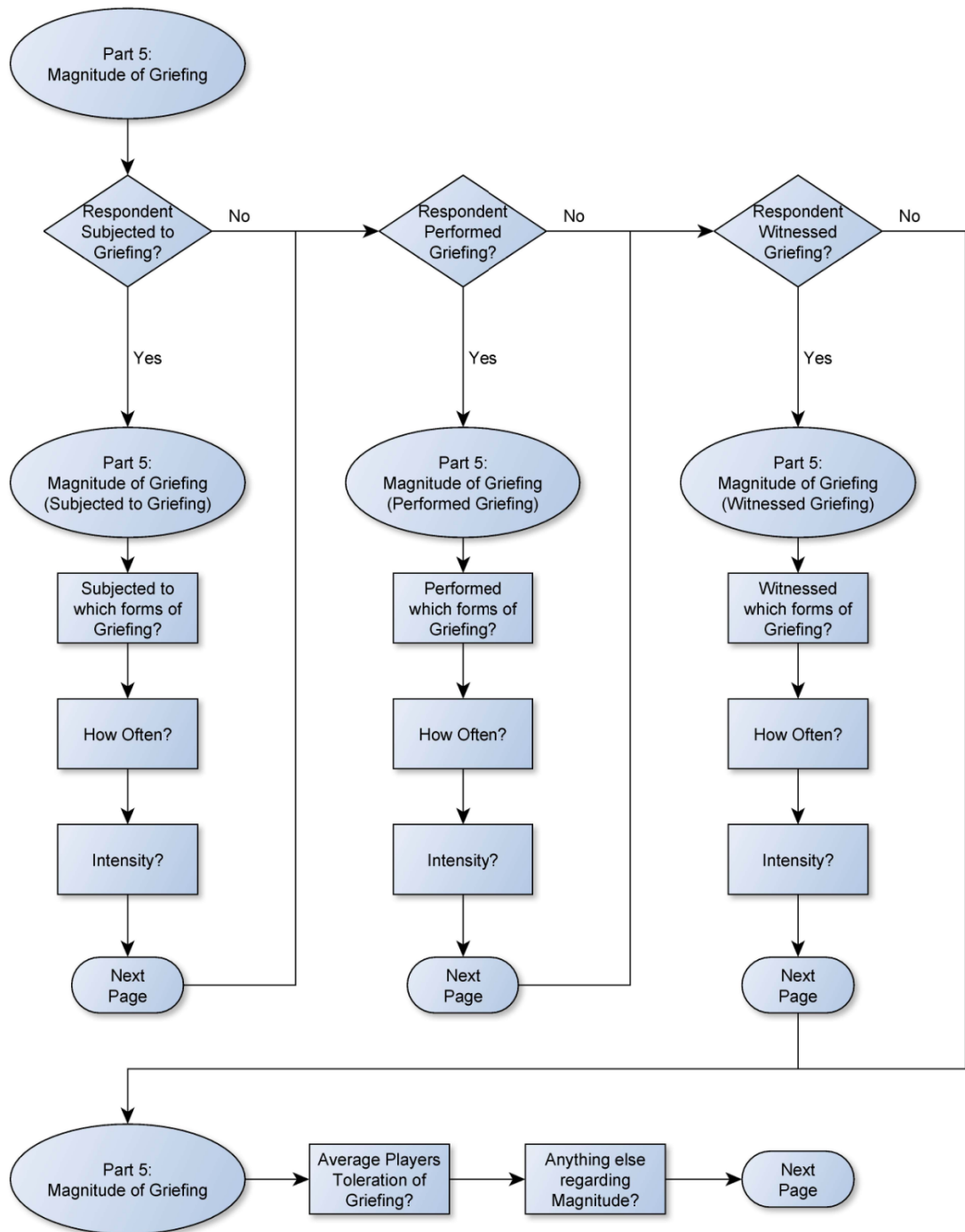
So during my time PvPing in battlegrounds at level 90 I can't say there was anything occurring that made me think "Griefer!" as we were all consensually participating in the battle. There was some verbal harassment in the chat channels between team members blaming each other for mistakes or incompetence, but players usually gave back as good as they got in battlegrounds. It seemed to be an expected occurrence.

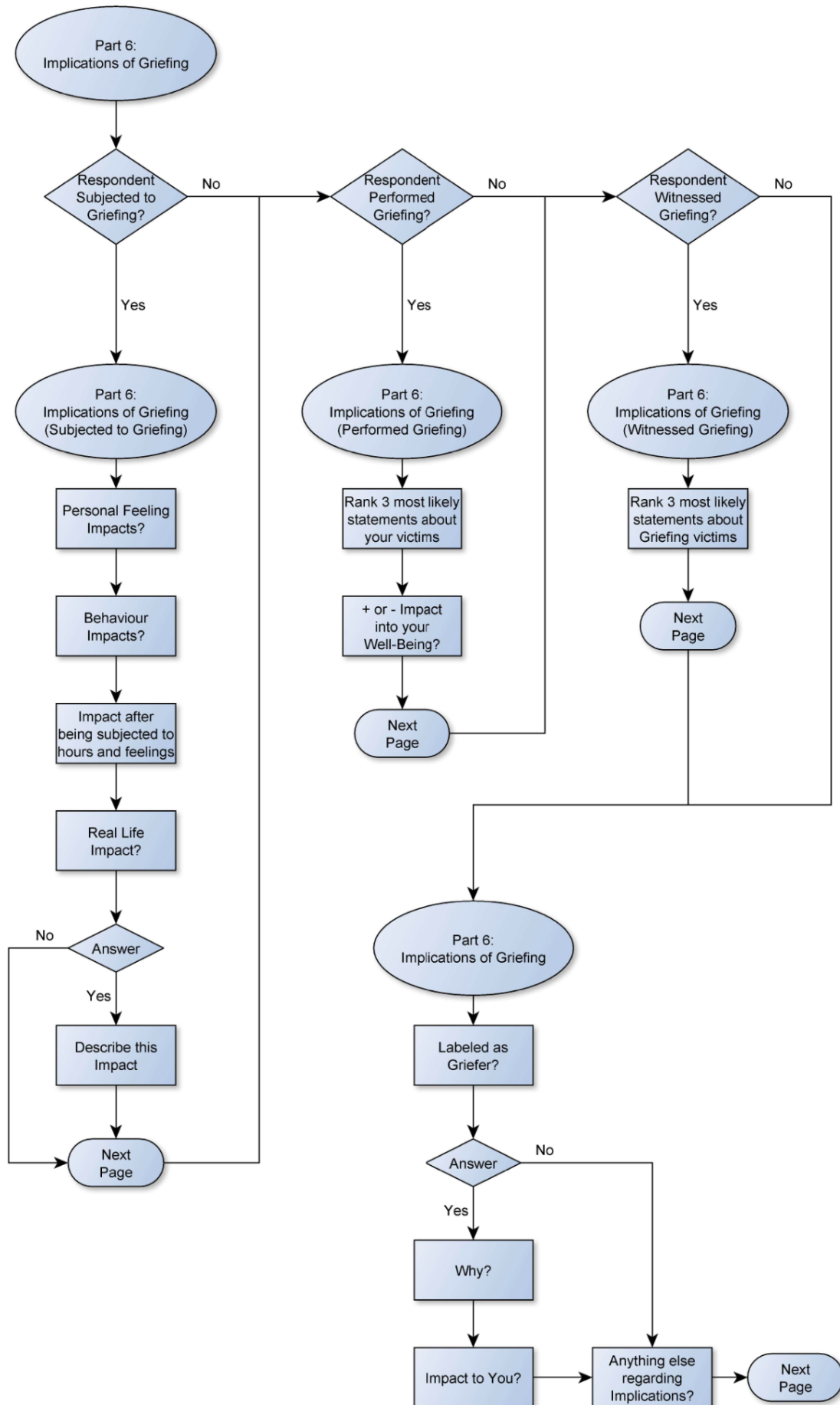
After everything I had experienced, it was at this point I decided to finish my journey, and end the story of Ling. I logged out, leaving my monk, of whom I had grown attached, behind in the virtual world.

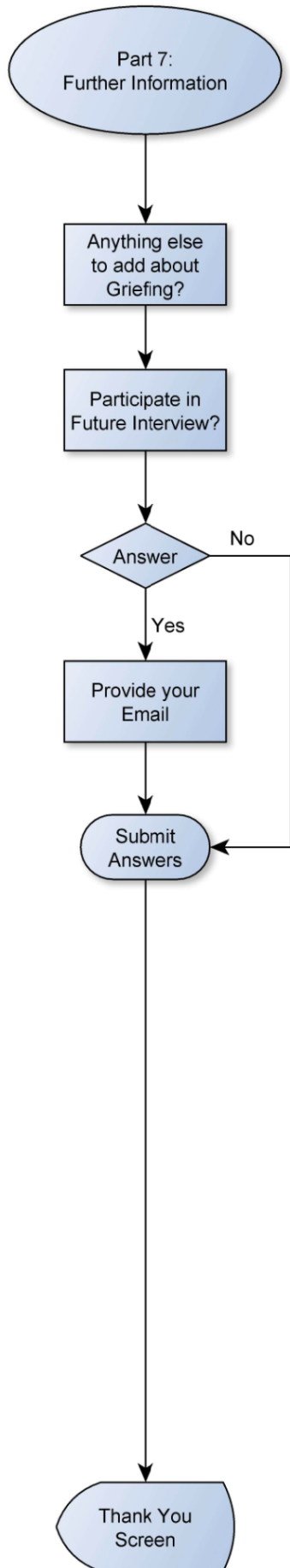
Appendix B: Survey Flow Chart











Appendix C: Expanded Tables

Table 54 below contains the full list of the respondents' ethnicity that was shortened in section 4.1: Demographics.

Table 54: *Ethnicity expanded*

Ethnicity	n	%	n	%
Not Answered	53	5.2	37	5.6
Caucasian – European	781	76.2	500	76.2
Caucasian – Indian	8	0.8	6	0.9
Caucasian – Middle East	15	1.5	6	0.9
Caucasian – North African, Other	13	1.3	9	1.4
Black or African American	5	0.5	5	0.8
Native American or Alaska Native	12	1.2	9	1.4
Hispanic or Latino	26	2.5	15	2.3
North East Asian	9	0.9	4	0.6
South East Asian	35	3.4	20	3.0
West African, Bushmen, Ethiopian	1	0.1	0	0.0
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	2	0.2	1	0.2
Indigenous Australian	1	0.1	1	0.2
Mixed Race	45	4.4	29	4.4
Other	19	1.9	14	2.1

Table 55 below contains the full list of the respondents' country of residence that was shortened in section 4.1: Demographics.

Table 55: Country of residence expanded

Country of Residence	Dataset 1 (n=1025)		Dataset 2 (n=656)	
	n	%	n	%
United States	440	42.9	289	44.1
United Kingdom	97	9.5	63	9.6
Australia	67	6.5	43	6.6
Canada	66	6.4	42	6.4
Germany	38	3.7	24	3.7
Denmark	36	3.5	15	2.3
Netherlands	34	3.3	24	3.7
Sweden	31	3.0	19	2.9
Finland	18	1.8	13	2.0
Belgium	14	1.4	9	1.4
Norway	14	1.4	8	1.2
New Zealand	13	1.3	9	1.4
Poland	13	1.3	5	0.8
France	12	1.2	12	1.8
Italy	7	0.7	6	0.9
Turkey	7	0.7	6	0.9
Brazil	6	0.6	4	0.6
Ireland	6	0.6	5	0.8
Portugal	6	0.6	3	0.5
Singapore	6	0.6	5	0.8
Spain	6	0.6	3	0.5
Bulgaria	5	0.5	2	0.3
Greece	5	0.5	4	0.6
Slovakia	5	0.5	2	0.3
Switzerland	5	0.5	4	0.6
India	5	0.5	3	0.5
Japan	4	0.4	2	0.3
Romania	4	0.4	4	0.6
Austria	4	0.4	2	0.3
Afghanistan	3	0.3	1	0.2
Croatia	3	0.3	2	0.3
Czech Republic	3	0.3	2	0.3
Estonia	3	0.3	1	0.2
Serbia	3	0.3	2	0.3
Argentina	3	0.3	1	0.2
Egypt	2	0.2	1	0.2

(Table 55 continued)	Dataset 1 (n=1025)		Dataset 2 (n=656)	
Country of Residence	n	%	n	%
Hungary	2	0.2	2	0.3
Korea (South)	2	0.2	0	0.0
Lithuania	2	0.2	2	0.3
Malaysia	2	0.2	0	0.0
Mexico	2	0.2	1	0.2
Saudi Arabia	2	0.2	1	0.2
South Africa	2	0.2	1	0.2
Aland Islands	1	0.1	0	0.0
Aruba	1	0.1	1	0.2
Barbados	1	0.1	0	0.0
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1	0.1	0	0.0
Chile	1	0.1	0	0.0
Hong Kong	1	0.1	1	0.2
Indonesia	1	0.1	1	0.2
Israel	1	0.1	0	0.0
Korea (North)	1	0.1	1	0.2
Kuwait	1	0.1	1	0.2
Libya	1	0.1	0	0.0
Oman	1	0.1	0	0.0
Pakistan	1	0.1	1	0.2
Peru	1	0.1	1	0.2
Philippines	1	0.1	0	0.0
Puerto Rico	1	0.1	0	0.0
Russian Federation	1	0.1	0	0.0
Seychelles	1	0.1	0	0.0
Ukraine	1	0.1	1	0.2
United Arab Emirates	1	0.1	1	0.2

Appendix D: Survey Recruitment Advertisement

Thesis Title:

Causes, Magnitude and Implications of Griefing in Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games

<http://medusa.ballarat.edu.au/limesurvey/index.php?sid=44463>

Hello,

My name is Leigh Achterbosch and I am a candidate for PhD at the University of Ballarat, Australia. I am inviting you to participate in a study about the act of griefing and its implications in Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games (MMORPGs). This is one of many invitations posted on various MMORPG and online game forums.

This research will explore the following questions; what are the causes and implications of griefing in MMORPGs, and what magnitude of griefing exists in this genre? The intention is to contribute new research and knowledge about griefing and its sociological impact.

The study will involve an online survey for participants of the ages 16 and above. This survey will cover your experiences as someone that has performed griefing, been subjected to griefing, or as a witness to the acts of griefing.

You are invited to participate by following the link <http://medusa.ballarat.edu.au/limesurvey/index.php?sid=44463> and completing the questionnaire that will take approximately 20 minutes of your time (You can save and reload unfinished surveys should you require). You will remain anonymous by completing this survey. The online survey will remain open until an appropriate sample size is collected. I will repost here when the survey has closed. At some point in the future when data has been collated and analysed I will repost with some preliminary results in this forum thread.

I would like to thank you up front for any time you allocate towards this research endeavour. Feel free to spread this survey link around! :)

Yours sincerely,

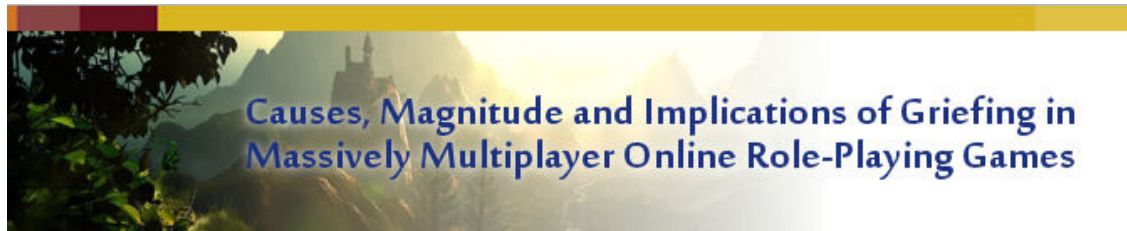
Leigh Achterbosch

PhD Candidate

University of Ballarat, Australia

lacherbosch [AT] ballarat.edu.au (please replace AT with @)

Appendix E: Plain Language Information Statement for Potential Survey Participants



- PhD Student Researcher: Leigh Achterbosch – l.achterbosch@ballarat.edu.au
- Principal Researcher: Dr. Charlynn Miller – c.miller@ballarat.edu.au
- Associate Researcher: Dr. Peter Vamplew

Thank you for your interest in participating in the research project about the act of griefing and its implications in Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games (MMORPGs):

Every day in online games accessed through an Internet connection, an unknown percentage of users are experiencing what is known as ‘Griefing’. Griefing is used to describe when a player within a multiplayer online environment causes grief and disruption to another player for their own personal enjoyment. Over the next two years the authors will explore the following questions; what are the causes and implications of griefing in MMORPGs, and what magnitude of griefing exists in this genre? The intention is to contribute new research to the Information Technology areas of online games and griefing, expanding our knowledge in these areas. This survey will help the authors accomplish these goals.

- Participation is voluntary for people of age 16 and above, and will take approximately 20 minutes to complete.
- You will remain anonymous in completing this survey. The only identifying data that may be obtained is your email, should you wish to provide it for further studies. This email shall be detached from your data so your answers remain anonymous.
- You will be implying consent to use any data you provide as you progress through each question.
- Progress through this survey can be saved and continued at a later time through the functions at the bottom of the screen.

Some participants may experience discomfort in answering questions relating to victimisation resulting from griefing. The authors would like to direct you to seek assistance from international voluntary emotional support groups such as [Lifeline International](#) or one of their [recommended support groups](#) should you feel the need to do so. There are also questions that some people may consider as personal and private. These questions are entirely optional, and will be identified as such.

Data from this survey shall be stored on University of Ballarat servers, with results and analysis forming the bulk of the student researcher’s PhD thesis. When analysis is

complete, the authors shall provide a written summary of results which can be obtained from the same location in which you obtained access to the survey. If you have any questions, or you would like further information regarding this project please contact the student researcher Leigh Achterbosch, or the Principal Researcher, Dr. Charlynn Miller of the School of Science, Information Technology and Engineering – University of Ballarat.

Should you (i.e. the participant) have any concerns about the ethical conduct of this research project, please contact the University of Ballarat Ethics Officer, Research Services, University of Ballarat, PO Box 663, Mt Helen VIC 3353. Telephone: +61 3 5327 9765, Email: ub.ethics@ballarat.edu.au

Next >>

Exit and clear survey

Load unfinished survey

Appendix F: Survey Data Open-Ended Questions and Answers

F.1 Are there any other forms of griefing you can identify?

3	Taking in-game arguments to forums, otherwise known as "Forum PVP"
10	group/guild politics player to player/auction house
12	(Ingame) Stalking
14	kicked out of guild for asking too many beginner questions
15	Real-life money scamming (I feel this is different from the scamming mentioned above)
48	zerging
55	Advancement Blocking (non instanced games).
56	Spontaneous Guild Kicking Stalking - slightly different from verbal harassment as it also involves use of chat interface
62	Graphic Lag Spam
74	Losing on purpose to annoying other players could qualify
80	If you count Minecraft, destroying other player's work by adding or subtracting blocks If you count Minecraft, placing lava all over other player's creations. Intentionally violating server rules such that it cause a deterrent to other players.
87	Cross-Realming. Playing both sides of the factions
99	Refusing to co-operate
101	Flame-baiting Stalking Defamation
103	Similar to Kill stealing - mob tagging.
109	exploiting mechanisms, like hiding skills or tag system which is very common and other mechanism at their advantage forbid other to use well known and accepted mechanism loopholes, and will grief people using them, those are the most griefing use more levels, like they will trash talk to you so to get you flag, and kill you without consequences, so it is quiet complex and old player definitely have an edge over new players that aren't aware of those systems
119	Racism in guild chat
122	Nasty remarks as female when using vent/mumble etc...
127	giving out real identities or private elements of people on forums for a reason related to the game starting rumours about a player in order to cut him from his social gaming structure (guild, team...)
135	Auction House Griefing
142	Not playing at all, or passive participating in a team/group
145	Hacks e.g. speed hack
151	Player shadowing - essentially stalking
158	Using mechanics to get a player stuck in a place he does not want to be
166	Arrogant behaviour sexism Bullying others my degradation of abilities

174	Trying to encourage members of a group to leave and join another group doing the same thing Casting unwanted spells or buffs on players
183	Outside of the game harassment (forum)
200	BOTs - aka using automated mechanics to accomplish things
204	Mind games Meta game
208	attacking other players because they die
216	Proxy rolls on loot Spoiling content
224	Stealing (e.g. from non-instanced housing) Area blocking ("claiming" HUGE sections of the world for yourself preventing other from effectively using them) Property destruction (in games with non-instanced housing/farming etc.)
234	Irritation: triggering abilities that have no bearing on game play other than to annoy Superstition
236	Over use of emotes
239	gold sellers ruining player economy
248	Following / Audio Spam: Following other players around and intentionally activating in game sounds that are loud or obnoxious to aggravate other players
251	Grief Truck Gank Miners Don't heal your teammates
252	Petitioning peanuts Crowd-trolling Spying, if it involves establishing trusted out-of-game contact to guild/corp members etc
253	Identity theft/misappropriation: a player acting as though he or she is another player, a game moderator, or a member of a guild/group that he or she is not, either to exercise authority he or she does not have or to tarnish someone's reputation..
254	Voice chat griefing, I suppose
258	Trolling Guild Disruption
260	NPC Blockage
267	Guild Disruption Knowingly exploiting people's general goodwill to gain free items or help
270	Guild Bank Robbing
272	cybersex rape urmom
273	Idiocy
285	Emote Harassment Gold + Power levelling sellings Account stealing
287	when allowed, forcing actions/emotes onto another player in a disruptive manner or repeatedly after being asked to stop
290	purposefully putting up items for extremely high costs on auction house/general trade network (so as to cause people to pay overly much for items which are not rare as in REALLY rare)
301	hacking
305	Trolling Hacking
315	Destruction, in creative games
316	Trolling
332	Trolling DDos attacks
341	AFK'ing

- 366 blackguarding other players - "he/she is bad at healing/tanking" - "that guild KS all the time"
-
- 372 Going afk when losing in PvP | Trolling
-
- 377 Hacking/third party software
-
- 379 Trolling the chat channels with useless or inane banter to try to incite anger or frustration (for example, repeatedly starting a discussion on whether or not game A is better than game B, to incite arguments on the chat channel). | Filling a player's in game mailbox with inexpensive or trash items, so that they have to empty it and sort it all out, thus wasting the recipient's time. | Lying about RL gender to gain an advantage in game. Guys will sometimes pretend to be girls to get "girl treasure" the items often given to them just because they are thought to be girls.
-
- 384 Bullying
-
- 394 Publicly calling out people | Back stabbing a good "friend" with information that wasn't supposed to be known to public
-
- 397 Trolling, as in lying or cheating players.
-
- 411 Intentionally dying in order to put the other team at an advantage in a PvP environment
-
- 415 Role-play disruption | Corpse camping
-
- 431 gossiping, indirectly attacking another player through people they game with by spreading (mis)information about them 'behind their back'
-
- 435 Entering a group Queue, for a role you are not capable of performing. Ex WOW resto druid in tank position. | 'friends' abusing the group kick functionality on someone who doesn't deserve to be kicked.
-
- 439 Destruction - Not stealing, but straight destruction of something a player desires or currently
-
- 441 Team Killing
-
- 445 Leeching/Doing Nothing
-
- 450 PvP Baiting - Luring a player in a PvP confrontation into an area where they will get stuck/die/glitched or otherwise severely inconvenienced in a way they could not anticipate |Teleport/Summon stranding/killing - Inviting a player to a group, and either teleporting or summoning them into a situation where they die or will be stuck/lose an extraordinary amount of time escaping.
-
- 452 vent bombing
-
- 458 Stalking other players | Game forum trolling
-
- 462 Out of game harassment | Stalking via the internet | Obtaining identity/personal information
-
- 467 spreading misinformation about mechanics, user policies, security issues, etc. | Tricking non PvP flagged players into inadvertently attacking another player such as by standing on top of a quest mob | account hacking / theft
-
- 469 Tailing | Defamation | Emote Harassment
-
- 474 Repeatedly asking for help in an unreasonable fashion/situation | intentionally giving wrong advice to inconvenience another
-
- 482 Looting guild bank?

501	Race baiting
517	Trolling
529	Zerging
534	Getting friends to gank you because you killed them.
541	Meta-stalking - IRL pics on forums, searching through online profiles, etc.
547	Intentionally giving wrong info to uninformed players
553	carebaring- complaining about open PvP on an open PvP server targeted harassment - focusing harassment on a singled out player forum rage
560	AFK / not helping
571	NPC camping (i.e. quest npcs from one faction) Real life threats?
600	Server flooding
607	large groups of high level characters clearing out entire zones to deprive lower levels the ability to advance. stacking prices in auction houses to cause an artificial inflation and price all items out of reach for lower level players
618	Taunting and pulling mobs away so they reset and ruin the work of the group currently engaged.
619	Taunting mobs away from groups killing it so the mob resets and wastes their progress.
628	Hacking (cheating) Botting
632	ruining people's reputation pretending you are them on boards
634	Trolling
635	Resource Stealing
644	botting afk-ing
653	Forum rants Guild rants
659	economic exploitation in games with currency trade systems killing NPCs necessary for player advancement; massacring low level quest givers
660	none Griefing is part of games deal with it instead of crying about it
675	Leeching
676	failure to resurrect until after assigned items go global
679	Sexual Harassment Derogatory (sexist, racist, homophobic) talk, not directed at anyone in particular
682	"Stalking"
684	Skill spamming for audible/visual impact
702	Profane E-motes
731	Hacking Server Crashing
735	Blocking vendors
754	Trolling.
767	Trolling
788	Racism Sexism
795	Botting Trolling
798	Camping Badgering players

800	Intentionally feeding the other team
834	Where one can rez items, rezzing a large amount of items
836	Trolling Sarcasm on public channels
837	runner/tank builds in PvP whose sole purpose is to waste the time of other players in the arena Dropping spoilers in chat
850	Begging
854	Begging
855	Comments: a) v. harassment, kill stealing, player killing, loopholes - these are all part of the "game", and it's up to developer to address critical issues of how game works. Comments: b) team/event discr., RP: even if intentional, it's not always detrimental in the long run - not every change of pace, order, routine is an outright act of aggression, calculated only to cause grief. It can be a form of constructive feedback. Not mentioned forms of griefing: abuse of perceived and factual authority over guild members, large-scale market manipulation, "playing the system" instead of playing the game. Not everything a developer can fix, rest is up to players themselves.
859	Abuse of account sitting - when given permission by an AFK player to use their account, then sabotaging it Punishing a team member without first explaining the team rules. (usually done by know-it-all 14-year-olds)
871	Trolling
889	Doxing
896	Using game animations in crude/offensive manners
898	Overuse of harsh language
911	Social griefing - maliciously scheming players, often friends, teammates and guild mates, into hating each other and causing "drama" for pure amusement.
918	Destruction of player built stuff
932	Destroying other peoples work
935	to single out a player repeatedly and harass them
937	Pointless asset destruction (certain games)
940	Being AFK where it's not supposed to be Account theft Comparing games publically
943	Sexual Harassment - Making lewd or unwanted comments directed at a person's gender or sexual preference Real-life threats
945	Griefing the Grieferers
952	homophobe jokes/hints in chats, incl. that's gay male chauvinist jokes/hints in chats racist jokes/hints in chats
959	Griefing is a part of the game. Deal with it don't be a cry-baby
964	*Answers may vary according to individual game mechanics*
967	Sitting on NPCs, blocking access Deliberately following a player and jumping around in their view, particularly while the player is fighting mobs Deliberately and continuously racing ahead to take nodes, chests etcetera when it is obvious the player is in combat AT the node/chest
975	Molestation of animals Destroying buildings in Minecraft Survey griefing

- 978 your griefing research is not good | your griefing research is not good | a & b could be examples if it weren't true (also I am from darkfall community where griefing is very much different comparing to other mmo-s)
-
- 979 Utilizing multi-boxing (multiple PCs, multiple characters) to gain an advantage in PvP.
-
- 981 Blocking passage using in game mechanics that aren't exploits | multi clienting for an advantage, either to scout, block a doorway, or decoy while their main is in the area | wasting peoples time, make them travel for a trade and troll them when they arrive
-
- 986 Hacking
-
- 987 Private messages of an insulting nature, or intentionally demeaning another player | Personal or insulting comments aimed at another in the game forums
-
- 1019 Reporting players for stuff you're guilty of (hypocrisy) | When GMs or Companies change something for 1 but not all. (Remove house 'cause rock by steps, but complainer keeps his house that has more rocks/trees through it, ^ see above) | When people (companies & gamers alike) alter something in a game drastically from what its current player base purchased the game for. I.e. altering game mechanics so they no longer work as they did before. Gamers do this by complaining unl smthings Removed
-
- 1020 Bullying - usually happens inside guilds, where "stronger" and "older" players in that community abuse the weak ones on a constant basis
-
- 1022 Gathering nodes stealing
-
- 1030 Economic Disruption
-
- 1034 Impersonation
-
- 1041 Bait and Switch (Luring a player into a guild for the sole purpose of killing them without repercussions)
-
- 1043 they don't get drops that others get | didn't make an event
-
- 1049 level chat
-
- 1056 Creating a similarly named character in order to intentionally damage a player's reputation
-
- 1060 racism insults | constantly hunting the person when logging in
-
- 1072 Stalking
-
- 1073 giving false advice (
-
- 1076 Botting | vote-kicking without reason | any type of macho behaviour
-
- 1077 False claims on their Reputation, like saying they scammed you if they didn't just to discredit them.
-
- 1080 playing sexualized avatar animations | creating vulgar character names
-
- 1084 Attempting to force a player to play another way. IE. Instead of DPS you should HEAL.
-
- 1087 Game developers griefing their own customers with carelessness | Playing mind games with other players by way of trust and/or IRL issues (close to verbal harassment) | Imitation of other players (looks, play style, name, also grievers giving public compliments to some player to attempt to make them look like friends)
-

1088 attitude

1093 If someone quits a group right after a mob or boss has been pulled making it hard/impossible for the group to kill

1098 kicking from parties

1107 personal tell/whispers, stalking

1119 corpse jumping

1122 Wiping out towns (killing all/most NPCs)

1126 Stealing items from players | Stealing items from guilds/clans/alliances

1127 T bagging

1150 Cheating

1157 following people onto online gaming forums outside of game

1159 Lying about real life events to leave game events | Harassment using in-game gestures, without words

1166 MPK Monster Player Killer. Player brings in a high level monster and escapes leaving it to kill everyone in the area | Gender harassment | Character harassment

1168 sexual harassment

1182 openly lying/exaggerating about how terrible someone is on public chat channels to intentionally get as many people to dislike/think poorly of someone as possible

1183 Vandalism/Destroying property and buildings

F.2 Griefed: When griefed, how do think you have been chosen as their target?

- 14 my guild did not believe I was a beginner player and they kicked me out for asking too many questions
-
- 19 because griefing and bullying is how people naturally act to each other. It isn't just something that happens to children and everybody has griefed or bullied somebody at some point in their life.
-
- 81 Because I am better than them, and the only way they can kill me is in a large group.
-
- 101 For speaking out against griefing, particularly when well-known players indulge in it.
-
- 103 Crowded locations mean competition (and griefing) over the few mobs inhabiting the area. Kill stealing is common in these cases.
-
- 109 i was griefed because i exploited some mechanism
-
- 122 gender (aka being female)
-
- 129 Chosen completely at random.
-
- 133 I don't usually get targeted by griefers. I prevent that situation to happen in the first place. :) I will answer the following question as how I myself pick my target.
-
- 134 CATS XD
-
- 140 wrong place at wrong time
-
- 157 The griefer is unaware of griefing
-
- 175 I belonged to a high ranking guild, and it's fun to mess with those on top.
-
- 191 I am female
-
- 208 I believe it may have been because I was a new and inexperienced player, and as such was an easy target. I listened to and followed whatever the leader said, as i was the 'newbie', and as such hardly knew anything about the game. If someone uses a rather scantily clad female character, or something along those lines, they are often targeted as well. I'd like to add an example, although this wasn't actually in an MMORPG. I'm adding it because it may add some insight, and because you might be able to use a good laugh. I was playing some matchmaking on Halo Reach, and was trying out different pieces of armor. I had recently acquired a robotic arm option for my character. I switched to female spartan model to see how it would look like, when the match began. Afterwards, i was quite surprised to find a voice message from another one of the players, complementing me on my character's appearance, and, of all things, asking me out on a date. I of course, admonished him on randomly asking out strangers online, so on and so forth. He was just a kid, probably around the cliched 8 years old, but there have been cases of older players harassing female players over similar things.
-
- 224 I had put griefer on Kill on sight list after he stolen my mine.
-
- 251 Just Random...

- 253 A griefer notices that I am trying to be helpful or coordinate a team and acts to disrupt me for the fun of it or to get a reaction out of my serious attitude.
-
- 267 I am targeted because of my class choice as a healer or a class with high DPS and low defense.
-
- 270 Members of a guild that the griefer doesn't like.
-
- 274 political or lifestyle views
-
- 312 The griefer is unhappy with an action or opinion of mine.
-
- 325 I am a role-player and the griefer finds it an opportunity to disrupt and gain attention.
-
- 352 Griefers mostly choose players that is either weak as in levels and/or items, or the player is already dealing with some other stuff that is hard by itself alone (Elite mob for example). I have been subjected to griefing in both situations.
-
- 367 I made an honest mistake that is being misinterpreted.
-
- 390 Because I can""
-
- 393 People often overreact to mistakes which everyone can make even most experienced players
-
- 405 Wrong place, Wrong time
-
- 429 The griefer knows me, and is playing a joke on me.
-
- 437 Just for the hell of it
-
- 451 Randomly
-
- 477 female character who they perceives needs assistance
-
- 481 Belong to a guild that is identified with a particular group the griefer wants to target.
-
- 628 Only time I really consider myself grieved was when a much higher level character killed me in open world PvP (which I do enjoy a lot) but then spawn camped me until I logged off. Basically I wasn't a new player, I was just a much lower level.
-
- 632 i am a member of a clan that griefs... a lot
-
- 637 NOTE: question of previous page makes no sense. Griefing is intentionally causing grief in other players. The options on the previous page were not in accordance to his definition, supported by this survey.
-
- 653 Authority games via raiding, etc.
-
- 659 For control of gatherable resources in a competitive region. Chasing off others who would slow down resource acquisition.
-
- 660 99.9% of the time they are bored
-
- 673 Not being fast enough for the players level
-
- 679 I am female, and men think it's OK to threaten rape and/or make demeaning jokes
-
- 684 For my gender/chosen race
-
- 697 They're a bunch of cocksucking dickwads
-
- 705 I think that 99% of griefers are totally anonymous and victim of circumstance.

722	Haters gonna hate, and I tend to roll with groups that are hated. Such as the Kingdom of Wessex, who are hated by near everyone in the games they play, for various reasons. We are a practical role-play guild. kingdomofwessex.org
725	the griefer is just being a sore loser
743	competition
744	Didn't choose me specifically, just wanted to grief and happened to be me
757	make a mistake
767	I have been grieved for being a woman in a raiding guild before.
771	The griefer is annoyed by me
774	Randomly chosen
777	because I'm enjoying the game. Jealousy, superiority complex, conformism, urges them to make me a part of their suffering.
797	Random chance; I happened to cross paths with someone who was in the same area looking to grief someone. People do this out of boredom and for entertainment purposes only. It is an aspect of the game that they personally enjoy, and I just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.
800	I am the best rogue on the server, random people try to grief me.
817	I am a vulnerable or unawares player, and am perceived as an easy target.
844	Griever has unsuccessfully killed me after several tries and resorts to exploiting NPC mechanics or trying to disrupt my normal PvE gameplay
855	We fear what we don't understand. We disrespect what we fail to appreciate. We hate what we feel obliged to believe, act, think. Most often, we want the world to be in our image.
859	as a lone player I appear as a noob
871	I'm a sexy beast and people are super jelly
875	Caught unaware or busy doing something else, so I am an easy target
897	Griever don't need a reason. As long as they can cause you harm or difficulty, you are a target.
938	I'm a role-player
943	Griefers are bullies. Bullies are often bigots. Grief minded players single out players as they do people in the real world. They bully people they perceive as inferior (minorities, homosexuals, Jews, women, etc)
952	verbally sometimes, just because they can
964	completely random
981	some people just roam around looking to get a reaction from others by making them mad
982	The griefer does not know me but thinks it will be fun to attack me and make me mad and rage at him. (This is the correct answer btw.)
983	Some players are just dicks and think they can push everyone around :p
987	I am a new player during a raid encounter which is known to all other members of the team
1001	Because I incited the situation
1005	Wrong place, wrong time.

1009	I have put myself in a grief-able situation, and the griefer takes advantage of that.
1017	Targeted because I openly RP being gay
1019	May be bored and want someone on their newb to bring their main.
1024	I am at the right spot.
1031	The griefer was grieved by me or my guild in the past.
1037	because i don't fight back, just remain silent
1041	Potential gain (I may drop some decent loot)
1045	Retaliation for a previous grief
1049	they don't like women and get called out in chat/game for being abusive to women
1076	being targeted because of some unusual circumstance (e.g. being in the others faction zone or for instance as a ranged character accidentally tagging someone else's target)
1079	random encounter in a free for all environment
1082	As someone sharing a common in-game resource
1087	Because some target every single person
1094	I belong to a guild that is being targeted by another group of people.
1106	when killed in PvP, sending a message makes people want to kill again to listen to more whining
1107	griefer is targeting whoever gets in their way/groups
1135	i am the griefer
1144	They have no other purpose in their life
1166	Harassment
1182	They know of me, but don't dislike me, but grief me simply because it would be funny

F.3 Grievers: When grieving, how do you choose your target?

5	Test of strength (my skills" as a player)"
17	I grief whoever I want to I couldn't care less to who they are.
19	Some people are just dumbasses and bring it on by themselves
31	Just a note, I don't grief other than in retaliation.
34	Affiliation with players/guild I dislike.
46	The target is part of a group and chooses to be apathetic to strategy, slowing the rest of the group down, and occasionally harming us by causing unnecessary character deaths.
59	EVE Online piracy - target enters 'gatecamp' and is destroyed after refusing ransom. Completely random targeting.
101	A vigilante type approach, due to most grievers managing to exploit loopholes within the rules of an MMORPG in order to evade a ban.
120	I don't grief on purpose, I try to be a nice guy and don't hide behind a screen. Treat ppl like in real life/like u would like to be treated
126	It happens by accident or against an opposing faction.
133	Occasionally, target is someone I have spent time in-game for a while. Could be a guild mate. I don't usually care for other people that I haven't met IRL.
134	madcatxxqtdj
135	They were grieving friends/guildies.
172	I often play on both factions on one server and if I come to not like someone, through playing with them on the same faction, I may attack them when I come across them while playing a character on the opposing faction.
186	I do no grief other players, unless they themselves are known grievers. Or have been bothering me for a while.
226	FFXI was virtually designed around your mob stealing" definition of grieving
245	Making jokes that are taken the wrong way
248	Target is a friend, and grieved non-maliciously, all in fun
251	Random
256	I do not grief
272	urmom
289	Player is unskilled, though they believe they're very skilled
304	Its very rare that I grief, but usually it's to cause a specific event as a whole to fail in an amusing way
397	Chosen by random
421	Boredom on-a-whim ganking.
428	Accidental Griefing
433	I do not grief.
437	Anyone for personal amusement
447	The target has put themselves into a position I can exploit
451	The target is a friend and I do it for the lulz

- 453 The target believes to be better than others, and makes this known.
-
- 477 they have been unintentional instances
-
- 512 I get trolled "into responding."
-
- 525 anyone that takes the game too seriously deserves to be grieved.
-
- 529 IM BORED AS FUCK OF THE GAME, and cheap kills are lols when there's nothing better to do (IE TERA).
-
- 571 any target i see, especially when it's a multi faction game of the other faction, i would do anything to make their life miserable... i see it more like a war thing, but i guess it's not a direct grieving, as i don't see any action that's solvable with PvP grieving.. Unless by game mechanics you have literally zero ways out
-
- 628 I've spawned emotes in PvP fort raids to annoy the other faction (demoralization, smack talk)... On a more personal level I have harassed role players by roleplaying very rudely (to put it nicely) in the main cities after they messaged me for being in their" area... It was not a role play server so I guess that was in retaliation for being told to go away. Generally I don't grieve though
-
- 632 they are there, and they whine... when people whine it's more fun to kill mess with them :)
-
- 635 The target is a member of an in-game race or class that I dislike.
-
- 636 i target any
-
- 647 Getting paid in game currency to do so
-
- 651 to prank friends
-
- 660 I'm bored and they were there
-
- 666 they are looking at my ore, flowers, whatever. I kill them. They come back and keep trying. So i have to teach them a lesson.
-
- 679 Sometimes, a person gets overly upset about something in-game, and I grieve them because I know I will get a strong reaction out of them.
-
- 684 Their attitude/chosen race or faction
-
- 711 The target just happens to be in my area of play, and someone of an opposing faction. The person may be someone stronger than me but that is VERY rarely the case so almost all of the time i can kill them.
-
- 712 The target does not communicate with the team and often makes mistakes on purpose to throw the game away/kill everyone/wipe group/etc.
-
- 722 I only grieve when the person has grieved myself, a friend, or a clan mate.
-
- 725 the target appears not to be very intelligent
-
- 737 Guild Wars "One guild's negative actions & reputation lead to stress between high end raiding guilds. (World of Warcraft)"
-
- 738 Generally I get annoyed by terrible players so ill grieve them since after years of telling people how to play I'm tired of that route
-
- 743 all other players are counted as unskilled""
-
- 744 Character my level I corpse camped, after being corpse camped by him/her
-
- 747 I don't grieve, if I do, its counter-grieving
-
- 757 sometimes i grieve one person by grieving my friend and they get annoyed by it.
-
- 778 Sometimes, like in the case of training, or kill stealing of rare mobs"

797 If I see someone that is associated with a guild or individual person that I do not like or that my guild has registered as a KOS (Kill on Sight) I will target them. This is the only instance that I will actually camp somebody. All other instances noted above are more of a kill once and then leave alone basis.

799 just boredom

814 Accident

855 We choose whether we want to grief or not, but most often the target is made for us instead. Vulnerability can be as much a fact as a simple ruse. Aggression can be aimed towards domination, elimination or simple self-defense. Our moods shift, our goals adapt. There is no easy blanket statement to summarise our motivations, we our very nature we're opportunistic.

F.4 Do you have anything else to add regarding the causes of griefing?

- 2 Most Griefer's are young adults that like to feel power over anyone they come in contact with. Plus there is a fun factor as well. Most people that grief could care less about age, sex, location. A lot of them are cheaters as well.
-
- 3 My opinion is that griefing is largely by people who wish to feel powerful; they're often lacking some sort of satisfaction either with their circumstances or themselves, and ironically their means of releasing steam is senseless violence, and the disruption of the enjoyment of others. Whether these people want to admit it or not, I think their issues are borderline pathological.
-
- 5 Some methods of griefing mentioned in an earlier question may not exactly be griefing in certain games. In games that promote a Free For All PvP Environment will little to no restriction, scamming (for example) can become a viable path and "accepted" (except by the victim and close friends). A good example of this would be EVE Online where certain players would run an in-game "bank" where players could invest, and the owner of this bank worked hard to gain fellow players' trust only to suddenly disappear with all the in-game currency (isk). In most games this would be considered Griefing, but for games like EVE, I believe the term "griefing" to not be entirely appropriate to describe such behavior. However I do not know what word I would use to describe it. Attacking stronger players (higher level, making the player a potential threat or competitor) is also not perceived as Griefing in games like EVE (or similar games like DarkFall, Mortal Online, Ultima Online, etc). High level Players tend to become "on guard" and aware that their actions may bring them possible misfortune. In a way, I'd say that they are accomplice of their own death.
-
- 10 I wonder if such people are psychologically ill. Sociopaths.
-
- 13 It's quite subjective, what people perceive as "griefing". Although I am sure there are exceptions, for me the rule is simple: people in general attack targets that are easy, outside of real PvP. Griefing to me is almost exclusively ganking, and ganking (to me) means that a person attacks a person that is not expected to be able to defend himself (or herself, but that's rare). Either the target is fighting NPC(s) or another PC, or the target is much lower in level, or alone against a group of gankers. The reason why I seldom get ganked is because I tend to solve the problem myself, either by successfully defending myself or by logging on another char and murdering every person in the zone (let me know if you are going to do a survey on passive aggressive people). Killing a person in a fair fight is never griefing...but like I said, I pretty much equate griefing with ganking and ganking is for small boys with penile envy (or people that are retaliating!).
-
- 15 I can't really say too much on the cause of griefing. But I feel maybe this website would be of help for you? <http://www.spleens.net/shots.htm> this is a website of a fairly popular griefer from Ultima Online. He would document a lot of his acts and post them on his website for all to see. If you have the time to read the website, you can see that griefing can be a pretty complicated thing. He has widely

different motives between his grieving stories. I think it would be a good read to see a griever talk about the act from their own point of view.

-
- 17 The first time I camped someone was because I was camped and that's how the vicious cycle started...
-
- 19 It is natural for people to try to put other people down. It happens to children (which people are trying to stop) but it continues to happen to people as adults. People just have to get used to it because it is part of a competitive world.
-
- 21 I do think oftentimes boredom is a big factor in grieving. On a number of occasions I have read that people were bored either before, during or after they grieved other players. Some people evidently see grieving as personal entertainment to relive their boredom. I think it is possible that they continue to keep playing despite their boredom if one of their primary motivations is achievement. I suspect they may feel compelled to keep grinding out money/reputation/special tokens in order to achieve some goal in their drive for more power.
-
- 22 Grieving sometimes is warranted, and mmos companies as a whole very rarely understand this. Just like vigilantes, vindication does not only come from calling a gm, atm darkfall and games with hard-core ffa open looting rule sets are closest games to allow good grieving and with that comes the bad grieving, hence the low population of the games current state.
-
- 26 I strongly believe grieving of all kinds is rooted in the anonymity that MMORPGs provide their players. Yes, there will always be grieving to some extent for the simple fact that some people derive enjoyment out of putting others down and they don't care who knows that they enjoy it; but if the proverbial veil was lifted to expose who people were, the level of grieving would drastically plummet.
-
- 28 The reason people grief is because they can. There is little to no consequences for doing it and therefore they do it to cause annoyance. Usually from my experience the person grieving another is relatively new just hit max level and is bored they do it because they have nothing else to do. Gender, sexual orientation, education or any other attribute is not a factor as you can't tell any of that information by looking at an avatar.
-
- 29 I think grieving is a stupid thing to term it. To be psychologically affected by the actions of someone online who is basically just smarter and better at communication in a written format represents a failing on the part of the person who takes it that seriously, not on the part of the person who may have perpetrated it, for whatever reason.
-
- 31 It is my personal belief that grieving is so prevalent because of the anonymity of the internet. That's about all I have to say on the subject; I don't grief, nor do I associate with those that do.
-
- 34 Boredom. Could be a lack of objectives/goals either in-game or out of game. Or just looking for another way to kill some time. Thrill of the hunt/challenge. Attempting to track down a single/group of player(s), stalking them for the right moment to strike (especially when outnumbered 1vs3+), and surviving can be good fun, even more if the guild/player names are recognized by both parties. Another method is using lesser known traps/tactics to trick or defeat an unfortunate victim, one example being an explosive that looks like a critter that

detonates when killed(it's common for MMO players to slay critters without a second thought).Evoking reaction. Some players find amusement in getting others upset. Purposely swiping all the items they can or only the one item they know is wanted by another. Another example is camping someone in PvP and hoping for some form of response, either through the forums, a whisper/tell sent from an alternate character that can talk to the enemy faction, or even by the victim enlisting others to help him. If the latter the griefer may pursue the victim further, either eliminating their allies if s/he is confident or by killing only the initial victim then escaping death. Taking things too personally. With a lack of body language and/or tone of voice it's easy for words to have a meaning that was not intended, as well as not knowing specific details about those you are playing alongside, may lead to verbal harassment/griefing(fairly common in battlegrounds/PvP maps) or other actions. Loot competition. When loot is tied to a single player/group it naturally generates competition that varies based on the rarity of said item or even the mobs that may drop it. When players with interest in the same item/mob clash it can turn ugly regardless if it's an enemy, ally, or fellow guild member. I've seen a more than a handful of players go to extraordinary lengths when they feel they deserve something but are denied, usually a mix of verbal attacks and attempting to kill/camp the player(in-game of course) either by PvP or through pulling dangerous mobs even if it means their own/party death. Accidental/Unintentional. One possibility would be slaying quest, vendor, or other important NPCs with the intent to attract attention to your location. While your intent may be a specific player/group that often rushes to defend or luring out more and/or powerful players that usually have no reason to be in that area, you may have to wipe out an entire camp/town possibly multiple times to get a response (which greatly inconveniences those who are in the area but are unable to anything to stop you). I think this was listed on one of the previous pages but I decided to enter it anyway.

-
- 38 When using an anonymous avatar, many people seem to lose their sense of decency and respect for others.
-
- 40 People grief as they feel it's just a game, most people do it solely for enjoyment, and not about who they are, rarely will people go out of their way to grief people because of gender, or the other factors, because as I said, it's just part of a game, they don't think how it will affect others.
-
- 43 Almost every instance of griefing I have witnessed has involved a highly equipped, skilled, experienced player preying on a low equipped, skilled, experienced player. Any other instance has involved some unfair advantage that made it easier than usual to harass a target. Those unfair advantages have included: training strong monsters to the target, blocking a target in a dangerous situation, waiting to attack a target when they are especially vulnerable, and attacking players who were otherwise preoccupied.
-
- 46 Griefer tend to target the ignorant a lot of the time, and rather than explaining the situation to them, they choose to verbally degrade them. However, they tend to move on to the most readily available target rather than staying on the same one, and many people tend to be targets of verbal degradation by the same griefer.

- 48 I think griefing is often a reaction to the essential 'powerlessness' that many feel in real life. By being able to 'control' the enjoyment of another player, it bestows a measure of power to themselves and, more importantly, helps to counteract the powerlessness they themselves feel about many things in life. Obviously this wouldn't apply to every case, but I think it is a very common theme.
-
- 55 i have always seen griefers as egoists and narcissists they want to feel good about themselves so they pick on the weak or exposed and when grieved themselves they will run around crying for a month.
-
- 59 Griefing can be incredibly subjective, such as in EVE Online. There are areas that are not protected by the in-game 'guards' (CONCORD), for example, and players can and will hunt down other players and either hold their ships ransom or destroy them to acquire drops. These are generally completely random targets of opportunity, and the victim, as often as not, considers it to be griefing as it is non-consensual PVP in their minds, despite them having been warned upon entering this territory that they can be attacked. Another example is people camping the gate (entrance) to a star system and destroying any ship that enters. Again, many victims consider this griefing, even though it's wholly impersonal.
-
- 65 I believe I was once a target when I was in a competitive PvP guild 5-4 months ago and I also witnessed Griefing. At that time a female leader/officer of the guild got harassed for being female and I was a target because of my role in the rated battle ground team for the guild. In PvP guilds, skilled or experienced players are always competing against other skilled or experienced players of the same role. The same could be said for PvE but in PvE there are damage and healing meters, of course some argue that healing meters can't be used to judge healers but that is a different matter, my point is that in PvP damage/healing meters can't be used as not everyone is fighting the same battle and or some players may sacrifice damage/healing for utility. Every player must always play at their best and because there is no proof that players did well some start bragging about things they did in the fight and drama ensues.
-
- 69 I think most of it occurs because a player want a specific item and don't care about the other 5 in the group that want it as well.
-
- 72 all the griefing I have seen or performed has always been to the opposing fraction/enemy in the form of PvP on PvP realms so the only factor that comes into is competition on the server and the role playing fact that all enemies should be killed on sight
-
- 87 I am a PvP junkie. My guild as I usually hunt griefers that prey on lower level and inexperienced players. We will hunt them down, kill them spawn camp them til they log. They want to give a new player a bad experience. We do that to them. We also only do this with a MMO that we like. If the game is crappy it won't happen. Also most of us who PvP are dedicated. I for instance am a huge DAOC fan, Warhammer, SWG, and EQII fan. In WOW we would PvP a lot. Then in open world hunt griefers or groups of griefers who attacked our faction. The only characters I would intentionally kill were the gold seller bots. Otherwise it is only an enemy guild or griefer.

- 93 Griefing is a strange word for it. Mostly I do it for just personal enjoyment. I don't like being cruel to others or get off on being mean but I like controversy and i love the resulting arguments.
-
- 95 The main element of griefing would be the anonymity of the game. You could equally compare it to road rage.
-
- 99 Personally, I believe that griefing is simply a way to make people feel better about themselves. Nothing unlike high-school bullying, most forms of racism etc.
-
- 100 Most griefers are only interested in their personal emotional gain, there is little to no incentive to attack other players otherwise in non-regulated PVP-settings (this excludes competitive PVP, like arenas)Griefers (Pirates) in EvE-Online have regularly destroyed my avatar setting my character back one or two weeks without rhyme or reason (as a new player the wealthy i was carrying was laughable and not worth the effort).When killed, they usually would offer me some kind of monetary compensation that would not cover my losses but make them assert their superiority and communicate towards me that they have resources to spare that I could not possibly ever challenge. Refusal to take the money would result in my "escape capsule" being destroyed, leading to a larger setback. I personally believe that griefers in games are not interested in the game, only in asserting their superiority and power over others.
-
- 101 As someone who has played on a number of role-playing realms over the years, I have noticed that a lot of griefing can occur when someone is vocal about feeling uncomfortable about the amount of stalking, harassment, erotic role-play and bullying that is alarmingly common beneath the surface of many role-playing 'communities'. I have also noticed that a number of long term players end up viewing and establishing themselves as community 'pillars' and representatives, even long after they themselves have grown weary of the game. My suspicions lead me to believe that many of these ailing relics are so addicted to the game that they cannot bring themselves to leave and so lash out at those who seek a fresh and more mature, friendly and more welcoming community.
-
- 103 Here's an example: Lineage 2. Open world PvP, you can attack anyone at any time. You also level up mainly by killing mobs, not quests. There are a number of good areas to level in, and these tend to be very crowded, leaving a large number of players with a small number of mobs. All players attacking a mob get experience, but only the fraction of damage they have done to the mob. Also, the classes' speed at killing mobs varies a lot - caster damage dealers can kill a mob in 1-2 hits, whereas a tank class might take a full ten swings or so (in addition to having to run to the mob). So what happens most is that you have an elven spell singer (it's always the elves!) one-shotting whatever mobs a tank tries to kill from distance, resulting in the tank not being able to gain XP or gold from mobs, and having to find another place to level even if he was there first. Also, quest progression is awarded only to the person that had the last hit on the mob, and I think you can easily conclude who would get that in the scenario of tank + dps. Why do I think the griefers do this? There's no reason they can't. It's just an anonymous person in the area, and they're in no danger if they piss off the person. Most of the time, if the person decided to attack the dps, the griefer could fairly easily beat the attacker. Example 2: Guild Wars. While not a "real" MMO (only towns are persistent, everything else is instanced zones), some griefing still

applies. Main ones would be trade scams, and running scams. Running is essentially a character set up for the purpose of getting past mobs without engaging in combat or dying, with the goal of crossing an explorable area to get the party members to the next outpost, essentially unlocking cities in higher level zones for players that have not yet been there. Runners would often demand a payment for these services, and those being run would occasionally refuse to pay up, or simply leave the party and walk away without paying, and there's nothing the runner could do about it. (A fairly common solution developed to this - in most cases the runner had to cross two or three consecutive explorable areas before reaching the town, so the runner would ask for payment inside an explorable area before the destination. That way the passengers would have to pay up before reaching destination (but after the runner has proven that s/he is capable of reaching destination), and the runner would in most occasions get their payment.)

Example 3: Guild Wars 2. This is more of an example to the contrary, and though I'm fairly sure someone else will mention this as well, it might be interesting to look at the game mechanics and how they can be used to prevent griefing. In most MMOs, game mechanics encourage griefing, or at least make it difficult not to in crowded areas. (Kill stealing, ganking, corpse camping, etc...) Guild Wars 2 has almost completely eradicated all the ways to grief, so it's impossible to negatively affect other players' gameplay, except by spamming all sorts of drivel in the general chat. Regarding the mechanics: Kill steals and loot ninja'ing is not possible - anyone that attacks the mob and does a certain amount of damage (over 10% if I remember right?) gets full XP and loot, regardless of if they are in a party or not. So instead of kill-stealing, you're helping the other player. Resource nodes are instanced per player, so even if you gather the resource, everyone else around you can still gather from it. No harm done there. Instead of corpse camping, everyone can res, and get XP from doing so, thus encouraging helpful behavior. Events scale in difficulty with number of people participating, but only if the players participate in a meaningful fashion (i.e. you can't just stand idle and laugh while others struggle with ever increasing number of mobs). Higher level characters get scaled down to the level of the area, so they cannot grief new players by one-shotting every mob in range. So, in addition to player characteristics and opinions regarding griefing, I'd actually say that game mechanics themselves encourage players to grief, when the same game mechanics could be tweaked to encourage teamwork and courteous behavior.

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- 109 Griefing is more like a bad habit, usually the people that grief are the people that use out of game mechanism and are used to play in their daily activities. They use bots, or they abuse the flag mechanism to pick a fight, invisibility mechanism, dropping rules and so on, those people usually don't respect much the environment of the game and will look how it work from a mechanism point of view and play with those. So this is more of a way those people operate to pick a fight with you. Usually griefers will try to go away with the consequences of the game, this is why they impose you a long time of pressure on you. As an example if they thing you are a real life girl even though you could play a female character they will follow you everywhere asking you to marry them. So for me griefing mostly come from people that mix inside and outside of game behaviors. For example they will kill you over and over, because they know your character

will not perma die, so they will do it on sight. Someone staying in the boundary of the game will probably not do that. So it is not a cause but a way to operate so to speak.

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- 119 Griefing is practiced by those with little or no ability to connect the anonymous nature of mmos with the real people behind the avatars and thus act like school yard bullies.
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- 127 Griefing is caused by players who seek numerous things. First, they don't enjoy the game as work > reward. Or challenge > reward. They only seek for fast glory and fame. Just like IRL, these people truly have no life (much less than the so called "no lifers") and a crappy or illegal job, life situation, most of the time. It's amazing how good people irl are most of the time good people in game, and bad people irl are bad people in game. Second, they don't see other people as true people but as "internet people". It is not only they cannot be sympathetic or feel empathy, they also use anonymity as a shield. If you ever saw a In Game griefer getting insulted IRL in front of people he grieved in game, it's really funny. You have the typical "wannabe a thug", the guy who's just a jerk pretending to teach you about life by griefing people, or even the guy who is not implicated in the game at all and see it as a game to break the game. Without it, they would grief something or someone else. So, grief is about:- not having enough education- do not acknowledge the existence and rights of others- not having resilience towards frustrating events and grow focused hate instead- feeling entitled to live by the destruction of things- act like a mere predator in a herd of sheep
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- 130 In my experience most of the time I've seen someone grieved (sp?) is because they failed at something or caused a problem for the group by being terrible or undergeared. Now depending on how they've failed and their attitude depends on the level of grief that I've seen. It's one thing to screw up, everyone does, but to act like it was someone else's fault or to continue to fail and not listen means it's only a matter of time before someone calls you a 'retard' I've been in groups with new people, who have failed but said sorry, asked for help and despite a slower than normal run it was still completed. You get some people though that have no time for 'new' people, they want the 10 mins runs and will bitch, complain, grief and try and kick someone they deem be wasting time. On the other hand you get terrible players with some odd inflated sense of greatness, I've seen players moan about a wipe being someone's fault, then fail at the same thing themselves before ranting and quitting the group.....
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- 140 Griefing can simply be triggered by the griefer having a bad day / life / job / relationship / etc and wish to take it out on someone anonymous, ie with no perceived consequences. This in turn makes the griefer feel better and provides a form of escapism from their personal problems. In a way, griefing is the griefer's form of entertainment when logging in. They get good at it, discover new ways to do it, choose different targets in different situations, simply to feel some modicum of power or personal satisfaction.
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- 141 I don't know if it can help, but my take on why griefing exists is pretty simple... it's for the same reason "some" people behave like "immature jerks" as soon as they are anonymous on the Internet safe behind a computer screen. Anonymity. You can be sure that 95% if not more of the people who have ever insulted you on the web would never dare to behave like that when facing an adult person in the

"real" world. There is an old penny arcade comic which says it best, and it can be applied to anything online: <http://www.penny-arcade.com/comic/2004/03/19/>

142 Its out of control, i have hundreds of screen shots from quite a few games over the years, some i submitted a ticket to game admins and 1/2 of the time i am lucky to get a positive response and common punishment is very minor from 1 day chat ban to 2 day chat bans and so on, unless the player is reported numerous times within a short time admins are not going to do anything more. You won't sexually harass or say racial slurs to a random person in the street right? You could be jailed for it and taken to court, why does the same rule not apply for Griefing, Trolling on the internet? Previous MMO's i played there was some cases of in game moderators telling me to use specific titles for any ticket i submit as there support service filters 1/2 of the submitted tickets, sometimes i have been told they do not accept screenshots of the bad language and i must submit a 30FPS+ video in a specific format (just so they don't have to deal with the issue or deal out punishment)it could be fairly simple to address the issue worldwide, first the game admins dish out punishment to scare the community into thinking twice before trolling and make it a news article, if it continues at same pace and players find loopholes with proxy software etc the game admins could send a complaint to the players ISP for harassment and after 3 complaints from any game company the ISP can forward it to police or local authorities and give that person criminal charges. But ISP don't ever address major issues like piracy... in Australia i have heard of people receiving 4+ notices to stop downloading pirated material yet nothing is actually done, are they waiting to build up charges on petty crimes so they can send someone with 5 copyright notices to prison for a year and come out a hardened criminal? MMO Griefing, Botting, Hacking, Scamming, Piracy and other ever growing internet issues are just out of control. you should get a PS3/Xbox360 and play 50 games as a noob and try not to teamkill but don't draw attention to yourself and see how many of those games someone swore or insulted another player (Call of duty/Halo and Xbox360 may be best choice) if some of the issues where addressed and some cases made big hits on the news and social networking and YouTube would spread the word that some 18+ guy was arrested for harassment others may start to reconsider it, easiest way appears to be if it can be dealt with by game admins but Xbox live and PSN report functions are useless, same goes for PC games with report functions and support site which require you to submit videos/screenshots and describe what happened they all need to actually do their job instead of being a "comfort function" and you have to use a ignore function and just allow someone to get away with it

145 In the vast majority of cases it's a simple case of bullying players of lower level simply because the griefer can. Occasionally it will be due to faction or guild affiliation but to be honest in these cases this is more often a result of a game mechanic with regards to the PvP play and isn't strictly griefing, unless it turns into corpse camping. Players on opposing factions expect to be killed by the opposition. Even so, a high level player going to a lower level area and killing players of an opposing faction is still griefing in my opinion. Again this is basically bullying and can happen due to boredom or the offenders desire just to annoy

other players, or because he finds it funny. Basically it's just a case of someone being a dickhead.

- 151 I've heard that griefing can also be a product of boredom - player x has done all the content in the game, so what else is there to do but go gank noobs in the starter zones, kill their quest givers and just be disruptive? Not sure how much credence I'd lend that, but it's an interesting perspective. Notably, genuine PvP-ers aren't interested in killing players that are a lower level than them because they present no challenge, most of the hardcore PvP players I know are far more interested in a fair fight against an opponent of a similar skillset and of equal level.
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- 154 I think that most griefing is done for power reasons. The griever is usually looking to assume power over another person. Since the internet is mostly anonymous there is very little chance of meaningful retaliation. To this person getting their account banned or grieved themselves is relatively meaningless. There is very little chance of physical or mental harm that can be done to them as they are just a screen name floating across the internet.
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- 157 I don't perceive griefing to be a matter of pre-set intentions. Rather, vendetta's concerning griefing develop during the gameplay. Verbal harassment is the most common form of griefing, out of which very often other forms of griefing follow. For example, one member of a group of 5 feels the tank is tanking too slow or is undergeared. This often results in a verbal harassment usually along the lines of 'n00b' and the usual standard arsenal of gamer insults. If the tank reacts back, it often explodes. They get in an argument and as always it's left undecided. The tank continues and the other player shuts his yap as well. But the grudge is kept, so when the final boss is slain the player that started the argument, he ninja's the tanking item that just dropped. That's the biggest problem in MMORPG's; everyone has long toes and it's easy to step on them. The anonymity of it all adds to a verbal arena where often the less powerful ones resort to griefing.
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- 164 I think one of the key factors is anonymity. If an individual feels that they cannot be held personally accountable for their actions (other than maybe a short suspension), then there is no reason (in their eyes) to behave. In every day society, there are numerous and myriad laws which govern our behaviour - that simply are not present in an online community. With good reason. Sadly, many people seem to forget that there is another human being on the receiving end of their bad behaviour - not just the avatar on screen. I think the other reasons behind griefing (to get a feeling of power over somebody else, simply for kicks, boredom etc) all feed into that. If they cannot see the consequences of their actions in living colour, they simply don't consider them at all.
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- 165 As an experienced MMO player, I've seen it in all forms and from personal accounts, it tends to (generally, but not always) start with younger players griefing either for fun, or in game gain, and runs on to older and/or more experienced players retaliating against the original (Something I have been guilty of myself upon occasion after playing MMO's ever since UO).
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- 167 Griefers have some mental disorders and are letting the steam to go out on someone else, making him/her to feel miserable while they enjoy it. I pity them.

- 169 It is often due to getting a rise out of someone, especially if there is a chance of expressing the complaint through the same-faction character or on the forums. Role-players are often targeted even on RP servers, as not everyone wishes to adhere to the rules and has a low opinion of the activity.
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- 174 I do think that the anonymity of MMO's means that people do not have the same reservations when it comes to social interactions as they do in real life situations. I don't think this causes or motivates people to grief others but it facilitates the behaviors. There is another side of 'griefing' which I think is important which is friendly griefing. My friends and I VERY regularly 'grief' each other in all sorts of ways but this is a jokey/friendly kind of interaction which we all share in. Maybe it's just the type of people I play with, our age and the type of game we play (DDO) which means while we may moan about another player in private this very rarely will reach the actual person as none of us want to cause real offense, hurt or harm. There is also a great sense of community in the game which has led to a retaliatory kind of griefing against people that break the communities rules (both written, game rules and the unwritten, social norms/rules). An example of this I have come across recently is where a player offered to trade with a guildie of mine. My guildie passed the item and the player who initiated the trade took both items and disconnected from the game. This players name was quickly spread to friends and friends of friends, chat channels etc. and it is very common now for people to refuse to play with the player who scammed. It is also very common that if that player has an LFM (looking for members group) up for a particular quest/raid then someone else will put up a competing LFM in order to make it harder for that player to fill their group.
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- 180 It's just a form of bullying "lite" if you will, the same as trolling on forums or something like that. There is a certain sense of amusement at the thought of someone else being either "surprised" by being attacked, or grieved, or at the targets imagined anger at it. Trololololo
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- 185 PvP is fun. Griefing takes all the fun out of PvP. I know there will be a small amount of griefing but in games such as Eve Online, Griefing is all the community does. There's a new fad to kill people in SAFE space even if the griefer dies in the process (just to harass other players).
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- 189 I feel perhaps insecurity, and/or maybe parental neglect, due to the breakdown of the family unit, in many first world countries, could have an effect on the behavior of younger people who I find are typically the players who "enjoy" griefing. Having talked to a few griefers, they seemed to be so miserable, that they seek out others who they can make feel miserable as well, and by doing so, they actually derive pleasure from seeing these other players suffer. I also believe this ties into trolling and flame baiting on forums as well, though your study does not cover these aspects of harassment, I have witnessed a few people who grief others often will have contests and set up bets with their friends to see who can troll and grief the most/best within a period of time.. Sometimes going as far as FRAPSing their trolling/griefing and uploading it to Youtube or other video sharing sites and forums.
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- 198 I think by far the main cause of griefing has nothing to do with character/player attributes. Most griefing comes as a result of perceived performance ability (at least, this is my own personal experience). I say "perceived", because often the

victim does not even have the opportunity to perform before they are abused. For example, a simple check of someone's equipment can result in extremely offensive and inappropriate grieving of a player, if they are deemed to not be up to standard (and of course, "up to standard" is a subjective thing). The other side is that when something goes wrong in a group party (I am specifically talking about the case of a group consisting of random, unknown, players), one player is often singled out as the scapegoat - regardless of genuine "guilt" with regard to the group's failure - and this person is targeted. With the exception of spamming, this is by far the most prevalent form of grieving I encounter, be it as a witness or victim.

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- 201 The kind of grieving I've witnessed and been the target of have nearly exclusively been a case of wrong place wrong time - the griever was looking for someone to grief, and I just happened to be a potential target. Verbal harassment over disagreements when teamed with random players.
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- 202 "As long there are people filled with Light there will always be people filled with Darkness, such is the balance of the universe." A.k.a. As long there are good people in this world there will always be bad people around too.
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- 203 There is one group of grievers called the goon squad. They exist in multiple mmo's and they specialize in grieving. I try not to grief folks but when folks do things to me I do retaliate.
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- 204 Opportunity to grief is the main cause of it. Some game mechanics allow it, some does not. On occasion, grieving is part of the fun playing
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- 208 most of the time, people receive grieving because they are not sufficiently skilled, are new, die, or are complete idiots (some of them really are).
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- 215 Actual game might be boring
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- 217 In my days as an experienced World of Warcraft player, I have noticed 3 types of reused grieving archetypes: 1. Picking off random (mostly weak and exposed) targets, to sate ones sadistic urges. A form of trolling if you will. This one was often bound to other trolling practices. 2. Harassing a player because of it's ingame social standing. Mostly due to open hate in player-formed guilds, but also due to the game's two-faction system, which made the enemy faction the only option to harass by killing/camping/ganking. 3. Grieving between friends. While in most cases tolerable by the "receiving" side, this one could easily provoke the target as it could go far beyond the bannable line. The dislike after this form does not last long, or lasts until retaliation but it is still an act to anger the target.
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- 218 I believe that many people grief others simply because they can. There are rarely any game mechanics in place to curb the behavior and absolutely no real world inhibitors, such as a punch to the face, to make people think twice. In many cases, grievers are acting out some sort of real life frustration that they are unable to address, and so find some kind of solace in bullying others. But there are also those players who are otherwise well-adjusted, who just don't understand that their actions are affecting other players in such a negative way. It's just a game to them. It's artificial. Therefore, anything that happens within the confines of the game is also artificial, including the feelings of frustration and anger they create in their victims. If anything, it's a failure of empathy in that they don't comprehend that other players may have more of an emotional investment

in the game than they themselves do. Unlike the first group, they aren't actually trying to be malicious, they are just ignorant.

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- 219 Role playing, some folks just like role playing the bad guy but in real life are as nice as can be.
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- 224 Player is often repeatedly (but with some breaks in between) attacked by griefers when they know he use to have something they want. Also often happens that griefers "claim" (verbally) some area as their own and attack anyone who enters until they leave.
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- 226 Never
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- 232 as a paying customer to a subscribed service i do not care to be grieved. That is why i stick to PVE servers and engage in PVP when I'm ready and for as long as i wish
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- 237 Bullies are always continuing the cycle
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- 239 Some games invite griefing because of their mechanics: kill stealing is possible because there is a mechanic in some games that you get the kill if you deliver the last hit.
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- 246 I honestly believe a lot of it boils down to a lack of empathy; these other players seem like characters instead of actual people. Also, the anonymity offered by hiding behind an avatar provides considerable protection. The majority of griefing would most likely not happen if the players actually met face to face.
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- 248 I believe that griefing is often done in correlation to the basic human nature as it relates to bullying. If one can laugh about misfortunes forced upon others, it makes that one feel better about themselves. In the same method that people build themselves up by putting others down. It's unfortunate, but there are people that will escape into the anonymity of an online game where they can exert power over others. This might be a coping method for making up for a feeling of being powerless in other games or in real life. For example, someone working a dead-end job where they must suffer abuse from co-workers and managers might come home, log in, and take out the day's frustrations on the poor and unsuspecting other players playing within the online game world. Or, perhaps a similar case where a child feeling inadequate or suffering from bullying at school can come home, log in, and become the antagonist. Personally, I am occasionally the subject of "friendly griefing" from those that I know and associate with in game. Technically, I would guess that this isn't necessarily considered griefing since it is poking fun, laughing, and not really done in a hateful, malicious manner. Turnabout is fair play, and I will sometimes also participate in "friendly griefing." Again, these are targets that I know and associate with, and I have knowledge that what they receive from me generates mirth, camaraderie, and friendly laughter/conversation. I'm not sure that what I have described is necessarily within the scope of your study.
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- 253 Griefing is, in my opinion, largely caused by a mixture of three factors: the anonymity of the Internet, the immaturity of the griefer, and the existence of a virtual world where factors that are not normally present in everyday life can be exploited. While most players are normal or even good people, these three factors cause younger and more immature players (of any age for the latter) to act in ways that make them feel powerful without also carrying the risk of serious

consequences. MMOs generally emphasize gaining levels, finding or creating equipment, and earning titles and achievements, and this emphasis unfortunately causes people to feel entitled to gloat about their prowess and treat those deemed "inferior" with a lack of respect, while also making more experienced or successful players appear threatening to the griever. I have played a number of MMOs, but my main game is Guild Wars. Guild Wars is a different kind of MMO from most others in that it stresses teamwork, creativity, and quick thinking over grinding, optimizing, and "cookie-cutter" builds. On the one hand, the community in Guild Wars includes very few "traditional" griefers who harass other players on the basis of levels, equipment, or achievements because everyone is more or less equal in those respects; you don't have to spend 80 hours to grind for one soon-to-be obsolete piece of equipment or to gain one more level. Moreover, the game is set up so that many traditional forms of griefing like body-blocking, ninja looting, and PKing are completely impossible. On the other hand, Guild Wars has a number of "social" griefers who prey on people in local chat, basically finding excuses to insult and harass them.

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- 258 In terms of verbal harassment, I think a lot of minor griefing or "trolling" occurs in chat channels that are widely available. WoW Trade Chat, TERA LFG Chat and of course on the forums. I think griefing may also have some kind of correlation with the sense of entitlement - The game mechanics allow me to do x, thus I have the right to do x. So world PvP ganking for example. Anyways, hope you guys post the conclusions you draw from your research!
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- 263 You are asking us to get into the heads of people a bit, here - the truth is, I have no idea why people think griefing is OK, or fun, or acceptable - my answers to those questions is pure speculation on my part. And there aren't any causes that make it reasonable anyhow.
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- 267 I believe people like feeling powerful and unique in online games because that's what a lot of people like in real life as well. It's quite a bit easier to feel that way in games so I think people like to use that power by griefing others.
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- 270 Game frustration, Real life frustration, Competing guilds, Personal Problems, Revenge for acts ingame, and bad relationships ingame.
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- 271 Griefing can sometimes happen because of different ideas about how a game is supposed to be played. For instance, in City of Villains, one person in a team might be role playing a villain that constantly puts down everyone else in the team while another player in the team hasn't ever encountered anyone who role plays before. This will obviously lead to problems fast for the non-role-player but the role-player may not even realize there's an issue! Naturally, many griefers will try to claim this is the cause of their griefing. Particularly in games where you are playing the "evil" side of things.
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- 272 I like to @\$) urmom, make sure to tell her I want my underwear back.
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- 273 De-Evolution and Desensitized to any form of empathy in a social context.
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- 287 In my experience, griefing is often the result of people thinking they can get away with anything because "it's just the Internet" so "it doesn't matter--it's not like I'm serious" when they often are or are doing things that could come off as serious especially to someone who might have had bad experiences with such a thing sometime in their life. The griever just doesn't care because they are anonymous

and so is their victim (a lot of the time, though not always). Personally, I was bullied a lot in school and I will admit it has left me sensitized to this kind of thing, but that doesn't mean that someone should be allowed to come in and act as they will just because they 'can' and no one can (or will care to) track them down for something so 'silly.' It's the snowball effect in essence. People get away with something like that once and continue again and again because no one steps up. ("It's just a game so chill. I play my way you play yours, except of course, I'm camping your corpse and you aren't going anywhere. Too bad, so sad. QQ more noob!") I see this mentality the most in PVP which is why I avoid it. My husband plays a PVP oriented game with some of his guy buddies though and almost all examples of griefing that I've seen in those games come for those reasons. It's actually sad to see otherwise really nice guys suddenly become such jerks just because they are hiding behind a screen. Since I avoid PVP for those reasons, most of the griefing I've personally experienced has been the wrong place wrong time type. There was really nothing about me in specific; I was just there and they felt like having 'fun.' Of course, in some ways that is the worst kind because it's just a little thing to them ("You're reporting me for what? Geez, what a baby!") When it might actually ruin your whole play session.

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- 290 Having heard convos on TeamSpeak, Ventrilo, mumble etc; it seems to me that most griefers are obnoxious assholes that also try to act this way in real life, of course in real life they have to physically be near a person the grief, making them more vulnerable to physical harm. Griefers are all air and talk on the web, but when it comes to the real world, they are conniving sneaky bastards that backstab people only when they get away with it, they also have megalomaniac tendencies.
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- 297 I had difficulty answering the questions, because they imply a pattern to griefing which is based upon things which may not be readily apparent in-game. In my experience most griefing is opportunistic. Mainly it seems to be an excuse to be nasty to someone who doesn't know as much about the game as you do (and an opportunity to increase your own status or level of self-satisfaction. Griefing seems more common when the griever believes another is not meeting their expectations (by playing badly, or just unconventionally) or not giving over loot to which the griever believes he is more entitled. In the game I play, DDO, the average age is higher than WOW and some of the other more popular online games. I have only seen very few instances where people are (not jokingly) grieved because of their real life situations, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, educational level, etc.
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- 302 Griever I knew (WoW) usually considered other people as "tool" to achieve their personal goal, without consideration for the other players ("they deserve it if they got tricked" or "if it was not allowed then I'd get ban" being often use as excuses). I played for a while with some pple organizing raids with the intent of keeping all "interesting" loot for themselves (so-called ninjas), usually because they started to be so common that it was "safer" playing with someone you knew won't scam you (but will scam others) than with someone you don't know that might scam you. I would never invite someone to their raids, and would refuse to get any "undeserved" loot from them (giving it back to its "legitimate" owner in the case they still gave it to me), but would omit warning players that they'll most

probably be scammed if they wanted some "good" objects the raid leader also "needed"

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- 304 From what I gather, most people grief for the same reason people are jerks on the internet: they're anonymous 13 year olds who don't understand the repercussions of their actions and can cause harm due to anonymity. Personally, very occasionally, I will grief in amusing harmless ways. For example, one time Gail made a PR visit to Kamadan in Guild wars, I released a hundred ghost in a boxes for my amusement. If you played guild wars one, you would know that this would cause every necromancer to think Gail just slaughtered half the town due to the soul reaping in town bug. It was harmless and pretty funny when people yelled "WHY GAIL WHY?" when in fact nothing really happened.
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- 305 Purely verbal grieving (which I call trolling) is done for personal or group amusement usually but is not going to get the griever any monetary gain (either in game or in real currency).
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- 310 Very rarely do griefers know any of the personal information on their target, it's all kept to the information that the victim chooses to disclose.
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- 312 I believe grieving has very little to do with the appearance of the avatar or even the person behind the screen. In my experience it is mostly a reaction to an act or a statement the griever is unhappy with, like someone taking loot the griever wanted, someone is criticizing the grievers play style, choice of gear or just makes fun of his bragging.
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- 316 Boredom combined with a malicious nature is often the cause.
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- 318 This comes from someone who has played for about 14 years on PVE servers, and less than a year on a PVP server (my brother finally talked me into trying PVP in SWTOR). So what is considered "griefing" is a different story on a PVP server vs. a PVE server. You are expected to endure verbal and other harassment on a PVP server as a matter of course that would be anathema in the community of a PVE server. But by and large, true grieving, repeatedly attempting to harm the same person mentally or through their character, occurs when the person grieving feels there are no consequences. The target is nearly always perceived as weaker. When I stated that my persona or appearance contributed to my being grieved, I play healer type girly girls in dresses....I tend to look "weak" by even MMO standards, despite the fact that appearance has no real bearing on actual strength in an MMO. I am nearly always attacked more frequently than my good friend who also plays female characters, but tends to play the ones who wear heavy trooper armor. She complains about it, as she likes open world PVP more than I do. We call me the killer magnet. This held true in PVP warzones until I changed my gear to the standard PVP look. I was an insta target when I wore my pretty white dress. So I think perceived weakness has much to do with targets of opportunity, whether the weakness is in actual levels or the character simply "appears" weak. By grieving in a PVP world context, I don't mean someone simply killing me, as that is the purpose of a PVP server, but corpse camping or repeatedly interrupting me while questing (in SWTOR, for instance, waiting until my dialogue with quest npc's finishes, as you are not attackable when in a dialogue cutscene), and repeating these actions to the point where you cannot play the game. During the one big live event SWTOR has

staged, grieving on our server meant that at the end of the event, the Imperial faction (higher number faction on our server), prevented the Republic side from spending the live event tokens to purchase items from the event vendor during the last few hours of the event. This is despite repeated direct pleas from many of us attempting to purchase items. The vendor was disappearing, we had no further opportunity to spend the tokens. Some of the people doing the grieving apologized, even as they succumbed to peer pressure to continue with the grieving. I had a long discussion with a guild mate who admits to grieving people on occasion, and she states she does it to relieve her frustrations of the day. It escapes her that in doing so, she's causing someone else the same kind of frustration. Her excuse is that "it's only a game." So she gets to feel powerful after a day of feeling powerless by making someone else feel that way, and it's all condoned because we're on a PVP server and very little is considered actionable grieving. Of the actions you listed, on a PVP server, the only one that customer service might interfere with is exploiting a flaw in the game, or very rarely, blocking. As a former teacher, I'd compare grieving to bullying, and it occurs for the same reasons. People making themselves feel better or more powerful by taking something from someone else...in this case, enjoyment of the game. And like in real life, it occurs because it is a) perceived as harmless behavior, b) there are no consequences, and c) groups of people develop a mob mentality when engaging in questionable actions.

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- 324 I think causes of grieving is sad but inevitable part of any MMO. Someone will always try to prove that they are better than other even if by others they mean new player many levels below them or single player vs. group of gankers. To say the true I cannot see a viable solution. Even a perma-ban of griefers won't prevent them from creating another account and joining the game again under a different id if they choose so. The only way is to announce griefers' names in the chat and hope other players won't group with ninja looter or form a group of strong players to eliminate gankers. By the way, I do not see punishing gankers as grieving. They totally got it on themselves by grieving others. So, I see it as viable form of retaliation. Gankers usually get their kicks from feeling gods over weak players, but cannot stand fair fights and run away, thus making the place safe again for players of lower levels. As for ninja looters and smack-talkers, there's little you can do aside calling them out in general chat and hope that people won't group with them anymore thus making those grievors leave your server and even the game.
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- 332 I personally believe that griefers tend to seek out weak targets, and relentlessly molest those who appear to "take" it. I do not believe that grievors aim to pick out a target based on their demographics alone. It is the people of slightly weaker, or inexperienced disposition, that, through no fault of their own become targets.
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- 333 In my experience it's all about anonymity, the person perpetrating the grieving knows there more than likely will be no consequences to their actions.
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- 339 It's a game, people need to deal with it.
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- 340 I think a lot of griefers feel "powerful" while grieving people in videogame. Many of them are under a lot of pressure IRL (difficult job for example) or feel diminished (boss, wife, kids...) and can be feared/hated in game. Of course not all of them, but some of them. I specially remember a guild master with a difficult and

underappreciated job IRL (working in a fast food, mac donalds if I'm right, as a cook/vendor). He used to run a guild in AoC, specialized in griefing very low lvl people with max lvl group. He enjoyed A LOT the drama in chat from the grieved players. This guild used to have a "wall of fame" of every insult they received. The fact they are hated mean they are remembered, and known (I still remember him, years later). Which is the contrary IRL (who remember the guy selling burger?) As I say, not all of them follow this pattern, but at least some of them do.

341 My own personal belief to why griefing (trolling) occurs is;1. You are anonymous when using the internet, so the actions have no real life consequences.2. Griefing is very "in" these days online.

363 I don't recall there being option in previous part for stating that some players might simply feel bad in their everyday lives, and use griefing to pass it on in games. Either that, or I've misinterpreted one (or more) of the options available.

367 In my understanding and from my personal experience, griefing is often a way for insecure people to try and prove to their environment but more importantly to themselves that their actions have a meaning and that they've come to some sort of personal achievement. The reason it is mainly witnessed on the Internet (and not only in games) is that the web provides anonymity. People behave as if their actions will have no consequences without realizing that some of their victims might be truly hurt by their attitude.

379 Having played MMOs for a long time (13+ years), it is my personal belief that most griefers are "normal" people who have succumbed to the lure of anonymity the internet provides. They are expressing sociopathic urges that they normally repress in their real life situation. Because they are able to hide their identities, they don't bother to conform with normal societal actions, ie, being helpful, civil, and polite when in the presence of strangers. There are exceptions to this rule, of course, this is what I have found from personal anecdotal experience (people I know in real life act this way online when anonymous, but not in everyday, real life situations).

383 nothing to add other than i feel that people grief because in rl they are either victims of bullying or are just bored with themselves, or simple are also bullies in real life

385 My view on griefing is that it is similar to a crime of opportunity. Nothing about the victim matters other than the victim is vulnerable. The perpetrator's purpose for griefing is just that they can, and get away with it, because there is no risk for the reward that they enjoy ruining another player's fun. Griefing almost never occurs in even circumstances. The griever will either be with buddies, or will be of such a higher level, that the victim has no recourse/chance of surviving the encounter. In games in which corpse camping is allowed (with respawns this is now rare), the griever will camp the corpse for no other purpose than causing personal frustration for the victimized player. Some games, such as EVE, and Pirates of the Burning Sea, encourage griefing as a gameplay style. These games are generally niche games which rely on new players as a source of victims to appeal to the griefers. Which is why these games remain niche, and not mainstream, unable to grow past the number of players who enjoy griefing. Griefing is not an "in game" event, it is an "out of game" form of bullying another player, of

disrupting the enjoyment of the other individual behind the keyboard. Of enjoyment that the other player has no recourse, no "power" to prevent the act of griefing.

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- 390 Griefing stems/appears from the anonymity given to those on the internet, but it is not the root cause. If there were no internet, cruelty ("griefing") would still exist; griefing is simply another form that exists because of the differences between our world and the internet.
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- 391 A lot of griefing in PvP/competitive games comes from the fact the griefer is doing a bad job/having a bad game, grieves others in an attempt to divert other players attention from his own mistakes
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- 397 I think griefing is usually a random act, with the aim of entertaining the griefer.
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- 409 In my opinion, only people who are extremely bored, or have inferiority complexes like to grief. They wouldn't dare otherwise if there wouldn't be the internet separating the victim and the griefer.
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- 413 You are missing some options. I believe that griefing is done a lot by new players who want to make them self noticed
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- 418 Essentially the key element in griefing in an MMO is the anonymity of the web and lack of direct tangible consequence. It really is as simple as that
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- 421 It's a very cyclic retaliatory sort of thing on PvP servers. I feel a lot of people who grief are those who have been grieved before and want some sort of indirect revenge. Other than that, it's usually when competing for world objectives (limited mobs, resource nodes etc) and killing the other player secures uninterrupted (ironically) access to them.
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- 431 For the most part I believe that what people consider as griefing is incidental. Two people attack the same MOB at the same time and one of them calls the other a griefer, that sort of thing. In reality I don't see that as griefing so much as just an unfortunate accident. What I personally consider griefing is when someone personally targets another player or group of players with the intent to annoy or harass them. An RMTer spamming a chat channel 5 or 6 times to advertise their service isn't necessarily griefing, but someone spamming a chat channel for 30 minutes straight knowing the only thing they are accomplishing is to annoy the people monitoring the channel would be.
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- 435 It's cyber bullying, nothing more. Griegers get off on ruining someone else's day. They might try to justify it by claiming something like 'We are on different factions, this is just war'. But a war is fought on a battlefield as army vs. army. When a powerful, well-armed person goes and attacks weak innocent victims, that's not warfare, that is terrorism. MMO griefing is like car bombing an elementary school. It's cruel, vicious, and there is absolutely no justification to it.
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- 447 I have learnt over the years in games how to avoid people who scam, rob, cheat. I think this trial by fire is the only real way to become a better/less vulnerable player. Games themselves are so depressingly easy that bending the rules and mechanics can gain some temporary amusement.
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- 450 The causes of griefing can vary wildly depending on the environment of the game in question, though in my opinion the vast majority of motivations are more about the griefer than the person being grieved as in order to grief, one must already have poor self-control and take pleasure in causing others to suffer. On the point

of environment: in a more open world environment (questing) the motivations for grief seem to be pure malicious tendencies. "I feel like griefing, and I'm going to hunt out someone to grief." This is very different from a PvP environment, where griefing seems to come more from frustration for lack of success "I am not winning, so I will take out my frustrations by finding a way to cause anguish to others, most likely on my own team."

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- 453 I feel that in one way griefing is just playing the game to some people, they may not even necessarily have anything against the target. Not an MMO, but in Team Fortress 2 (where I participated in most of my griefing) it was very funny and amusing to blow fire in front of a zoomed in sniper repeatedly. Griefing with teleporters and sentries as an engineer was also quite fun. It is more about the reaction from the victim as well as others. It is funny to see people blow something out of proportion, when it just a game.
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- 455 Peer pressure can be powerful in MMOs. You see a few people "trolling" in general chat, getting some laughs, and other people want in on the attention and infamy. MMOs also are very good at creating social stratification through easily identifiable levels, stats, gear, etc., and all of these can lead to feelings of superiority. I agree the anonymity of MMOs contributes, but considering that a lot of anti-social tendencies are behavioral and are seen outside of MMOs, I don't think it plays as large a role as many claim.
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- 462 Verbal harassment seems to be the most common form of griefing, because it is the easiest to accomplish. Generally, the person will go fishing for responses by typing something contentious or inflammatory into chat. Those who respond often are easiest to provoke. The griever can escalate the situation by finding the target and harassing them beyond the chat.
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- 467 I believe it's typically about opportunity. If you are alone or low-level in a PvP zone, for example, you're more likely to be targeted than a max-level character in a group in a non-PvP zone.
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- 468 It's the Greater Internet Fuckwad theory: Normal person + Anonymity + Audience = Total Fuckwad.
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- 469 Griefing seems to be a younger person's activity. Having taught middle school and discussed gaming with many students, the reasons for it tend to be as varied as the student. There was usually an element of boredom, excitement seeking involved. The anonymity provided by online games allows younger people a platform to try out behaviors without the risk of real world consequences. Given that opportunity, most younger people will try many different forms of restricted behavior, including griefing.
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- 472 The amount of griefing is massive in games such as MMORPGs because there are so many types of people and therefore griefing. The gold sellers and scammers don't care at all about anybody but the gold/money they get. Some of the other griefers do it cause it's fun for them, they can feel better about themselves, as well as the group mentality is being more enforced because of clans/guild/faction.
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- 477 I think most players who grief intentionally are doing it work kicks - especially given the anonymity of MMORPG environment. There are probably a good number of players like me who unintentionally grief another player.

- 510 The act of "trolling", or attempts to get a rise out of people emotionally and verbally, are what I perceive as an endeavour to gain power over that person, however imagined it may be. They feel as though because they are the basis for the reaction, then they have power to elicit it when and however they please. This leads them to believe that they are superior as a result from it, because they succeeded acquiring what they had hoped gain (a verbal response born of negative emotion).
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- 512 It is purely down to the anonymity of the internet and being safe behind a computer.
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- 513 I feel that a large portion of griefing honestly just stems from boredom. Someone who has ran out of things to do in a game but, has nothing else to really replace it with will possibly, try to occupy their time with confrontation. I believe that is what a lot of bullying is a result of, people are just bored so they attempt to create some confrontation. The problem is that they don't realize the impact their actions have on the victim. This is certainly not the case of all griefers or bullies.
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- 517 For me griefing is a pleasure to go around a game mechanic and show someone that you can do it and at the same time, grief him.
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- 520 Most of the griefing I've witnessed or had done to me is by a group/guild of players who were indiscriminate in who they grieved. I don't consider spontaneous PvP (on a PvP server) griefing, unless it's a zerg running through a low level zone and killing everyone on sight, and not allowing those players to continue questing. Many of these griefers will claim they're simply trying to entice the higher levels out for same-level PvP, but I've seen these players quickly disappear a force does show up to contend with them. It's part of playing on a PvP server, and I think most of us expect it. I've also played on PvE servers where there was in some ways MORE griefing (kill steals, ninja looting, abusive chat, stalking, etc.). The same happens on a PvP server, but on those servers, the player does have recourse (kill the annoying player's persona), which is why I prefer PvP servers. I feel like I have more control over what happens to my characters, and have ways of evening the score. I have never intentionally grieved another player, but have invited it sometimes by hanging around a zone where I know griefers like to prey on lower level characters. I enjoy making their task more difficult.
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- 523 I think a lot of unfair acts come from males who are just used to doing it to impress they're online friends. Very rarely are they ever punished or told not to by others in the game that they hang out with. So you get these guys that find each other and trade griefing stories and want to show each other up. And it doesn't matter because no one knows who they are behind their character.
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- 525 You are looking at this like an academic, look at this as an exercise in disillusion of social proof. The cause is mostly not motivated by any factor at all other than personality, and the victim's willingness to be a victim.
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- 526 Lack of maturity and not being held in account. The ability or perceived ability to cause others bother with zero recourse. This is the core of all griefing.
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- 529 Primarily, IMO, it is when a developer does not provide enough options for genuine, meaningful and fun PvP. People get bored of PvE and if no good PvP present, 'griefing' as you put it, is cheap fun for a quick laugh.

- 531 The only people affected by griefing are generally stupid and insecure people. The ones that grief, like me, most of the time perform the act in search of the self-amusement that comes from the reaction of the target. If there's no reaction, the griefers, otherwise known as "trolls", are not amused and generally stop. Thus the phrase "Don't feed the troll."
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- 547 I believe griefers know they are making their victim feel bad. So bad that the victim might quit the game. I think a griefer's goal is not to make the victim quit the game but to make them angry. The griefer wants attention more than anything. They get attention by making people hate them. They keep attention by being more powerful than their victim and therefore unstoppable. The only way to fight griefers is to ignore them. Never chat with them at all. Leave the area they are in. Also blocking their chat if the game has that option.
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- 550 Griefing has caused me to want to log off and not play for the rest of the day and in some cases leaves me angry even after I stop playing.
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- 553 I've listened to Dale Carnegie and I think he would say people "grief" because it makes them feel important. But then you always have a few a*****s who like collecting tears, but again, being a jerk makes them feel important. PS. Not all PvP is griefing, I think that the differences in opinion on what griefing really is a big part of the problem.
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- 555 I don't really know the motivations of why other people choose to grief fellow players in the game. I don't ask because their motivation to grief is not my concern. Trying to figure out why other people grief will get me as many motivations as there are people who grief. Each person has their own reasons for griefing.
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- 571 Most part of this griefing is I think caused by people wanting to compete with others, and many of current games not allowing almost any form of PvP. Even though like I said for me any issue that's solvable with PvP, isn't griefing, but I guess many others see random killing and other things as griefing.
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- 573 Sometimes games encourage ganking low level players since the rewards are the same as high level characters but can be gained quicker. This leads to people taking the easier method and ganking new or low level characters to receive the gear/rank/item they are after.
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- 586 I myself grieved if it's fun and I feel the normal way to play is boring. Such as blowing up stuff or making small traps and watch people fall in them.
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- 594 Players in MMO's aren't sadists. We just grief when we're bored or if we have beef with someone.
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- 596 I've been harassed with death threats.
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- 598 Cause of grief: To make the victim tilt. Meaning see them overreact.
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- 600 Griefing is the MMO version of bullying, it's a chance to dominate and have a power trip. I've found that most of the time not responding to the griefer (like logging off or switching characters for 5 min or so, and of course reporting them to the in-game authorities) causes them to give up and leave.
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- 601 People grief simply because they have the power to.
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- 602 LAWL scrub!

- 607 From what i have seen over my years of playing MMO's i tend to find that most of the griefers tend to be young boys who feel that it is their right to do this to other players, as it can happen in the game and thus must be allowed. When confronted as why the standard answers are - "because i can", "I am better then you noob learn to play and fight back" etc. My own thoughts on this matter and having spoken to my two boys (one of which is a full time griever much to my disappointment) with the sterilization of today's culture and the watering down of the male influence and ability to express themselves, through the whole touchy feely society that we are now forced to endure, the stigma associated with boys fighting to get out tensions and aggression, the whole if you display aggressive attitudes or tendencies then you must be sick and need help and medication and the rampant rise of woman's rights 9 that were needed) yet has gone past equality and now left boys feeling like outsiders in public forums (schools, social groups). This has led to boys having to hide their personalities in public and go "underground" to get out these feelings and the simulated violence provided by mmo's plus the empowerment gained by levelling lets them feel and do as they wish as no one can come back on them as no one knows who you are or where you are from and even if they know you are in Brisbane Australia for example they still are unable to actually confront you. So you have these emasculated boys trying to act as they think men should act in their virtual worlds before having to return to the real world where they have to hide who they are.
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- 608 grieving is a lifestyle
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- 611 Some people are pricks, and being anonymous online doesn't help the worry of their reputation.
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- 612 I love trolling other people, it is a good way to relax and take the game less seriously. People who are deeply affected by people bothering them online should take a step back and figure out how important online games are to their lives.
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- 619 I think your questions covered it fairly well, though I do wish the "Does this action count as griefing" section was more than Always/Sometimes/Never
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- 624 Sometimes griefing is akin to RP: killing members of the enemy faction because they are an enemy within the in-game lore.
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- 632 when you mess with someone, and they start whining... that's the most fun, especially if you can make them go nuclear... then you can also report them for bad language and see if you can get them banned ^.^
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- 633 I think that the fact people are anonymous is why "griefing" is so rampant. People can bully or "grief" others without fear of real life consequences. However I feel this is more of an Internet issue than just an MMORPG issue. If you go to any website that has public posting, like youtube for example, there are bound to be tons people using verbal "griefing" against others. Again I think it goes back to people being anonymous, well almost anonymous.
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- 637 Griefing in MMORPGs is quite simple. Immature people (related to age and/or intelligence level) who have spent a lot of time on the game to become powerful (NOT skilled) use their character's power to obliterate new players. This makes them feel good about themselves because they defeated the 'unskilled' 'noob'. I have only ever seen griefing occur in games where PvP is determined by

gear/level as opposed to skill, in MMORPGs. In other games griefing is caused by boredom/lack of skill at the game by the griefer. E.g. useless-but-annoying turret placement in a game like Team Fortress 2, or a player who is losing badly in League of Legends intentionally dying to enemies, thereby making them even stronger.

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- 641 On PvP servers starting to gank and grief targets who are known associates of larger guilds will usually lead to them calling for help which can often evolve into spontaneous large scale group fights. Even if they're not in larger guilds other friendly faction members may come to their aid leading to the same conclusion. Which is pretty fucking fun.
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- 644 I view griefing as an immature response to dealing with others brought on by the freedom and anonymity of the internet. It's seen more than just in mmo's; it's seen in forums, youtube comments, twitter, facebook, really any outlet available. I imagine the cause is generally the same, feeling powerful and important to make up for short comings in real life. The old idea of a man having a bad day at work so he comes home and kicks the dog. I avoid hotspots for griefing; I avoid youtube comments, social media, and the mmo's I play have taken steps to reduce opportunities for griefing. "Griefing is a way for individuals to project their personal insecurities onto other people." This is what I type into chat when I see a griefer, shuts them right up or they fly into a fit of rage and look rather silly
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- 645 Over the last 14 years of playing MMO's. I've come to the conclusion that the majority of griefing, from my own perspective, is almost always due to the 100% anonymity of the internet. Most people do it because they have nothing better to do and in my experience there is no cause linking it from one person to another. Other than them not having to suffer any repercussions for their actions.
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- 649 I have come to realize that a lot of the time griefing is not seen as griefing by both parties. For instance some players feel that all player versus player(PvP) activities on a designated PvP server are within reason and that people who also play on their server should know this and expect it there for griefing doesn't really exist and is mainly an excuse weaker players use against them. There are also players who feel that there is some kind of unwritten code that needs to be followed such as not attacking someone under a certain percentage of health or with X number of mobs on him and anyone who breaks this code is a griefer.
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- 653 Anonymity is probably the key thing here. Then the authority/powerfulness game.
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- 659 I would believe that the causes for griefing vary with the mechanics and theme of a particular game. Expected mechanics of PVP and safe versus contested zones change the dynamic of what is considered fair play and what is taking advantage. I was once reported for griefing during a limited event in World of Warcraft when players had the opportunity to become monsters and attack NPCs in otherwise safe low level areas of the game. High level players were becoming monsters and levelling towns where low level players were trying to quest and progress, and I was actively hunting the high level griefers. They considered this 'ruining their fun' and reported me, where I was content to simply negate their activities. As far as they were concerned, they were acting within the spirit of the event, becoming monsters during a doomsday type event sponsored by the game.

(http://www.wowpedia.org/Scourge_Invasion#Zombie_Infestation_-_Scourge_Invasion_Vol.2)

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- 660 99.99% of the time griefing comes from boredom. You are looking way too much into this.
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- 662 From what I've witness, at least in the MMORPGs that I have played, the majority of griefing comes from the aggressor's desire to demonstrate his or her power or funnelling frustration sustained in the real world into the fantasy world. I've had times where I would get on and camp helpless under levelled players for hours in order to vent my anger.
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- 666 If or when I preform acts of griefing it's usually as a teaching tool. They are usually trying to grab "my" ore, herbs, mobs or something. They are in my way so I kill them. If they keep coming back, a sign of not learning I kill them some more, until they learn, they leave or I'm done in which case i no longer care what they do as I'll be moving along. I have never just started hacking away at people cause imp bored. There is a purpose behind it. It might just not be the most noble one.
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- 667 Most of the time I see it in the form of revenge or specific hatred towards someone.
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- 673 Griefing is something I have found to be mostly about experience and the speed at which group tasks are performed. Also it is worth noticing that the more responsibility a player has (tank or healer) the more likely they are to be grieved even when doing their job well.
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- 676 as the leading demographic is usually young males, i feel that there is a certain dynamic that fosters griefing in games; to whit...that young males often feel a need to prove themselves powerful, and griefing is an easy way to do so; either for themselves or in front of friends/co-players...not much different than other competitive or semi-competitive scenarios also, the anonymity of MMOs allows those that feel victimized in their daily lives to 'strike back' at others may be a contributing factor
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- 677 For some people with some games, griefing is the primary source of entertainment. Griefing is a little different from "trolling" because it revolves around using in-game mechanics to ruin someone else's fun. What I consider griefing: Team killing, kill stealing, running mobs into others, exploiting bugs to disrupt others, and player killing much lower level players when there is no reward involved. Trolling, which is a term used very loosely these days, seems to be more about verbal harassment. I guess it could be a general term, but it has always been a separate thing from griefing in my experience.
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- 679 The cause and severity of griefing really depends upon the medium involved. When you're just typing the insults, and can't actually hear someone's voice, it's a lot more anonymous and a lot less severe. Since you can't tell how anyone is actually feeling, griefing is somewhat regulated by that alone. However, when you're actually talking to one another, griefing can get far more vile--often times that's where the sexual and racial harassment shows up. In addition, griefing can come as a result of communications about the game, from outside the game. An example would be on the Guild Wars 2 Guru Forums--if someone brings up a controversial subject such as the unhealthy portrayal of female body types in-

game, racial portrayals, and so on, there are a large number of people that will dismiss the issue and bully those who show concern about the issue. While this is most common on the chat forums, in rare cases a griefer will actually seek out their victim from the forums in-game (if they can get said victim's username, etc.) In the end, issues like sexual and racial harassment are a lot bigger than people think they are.

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- 684 Like trolling, the level of enjoyment I experience while griefing directly correlates with my targets' reactions.
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- 703 For the most part, from personal experience, I believe griefing is mainly just how some people get enjoyment from a game. It may not even be directly related to the griefer perceiving their victim as being angry (like a troll does) but just for the simple fact that they enjoy beating other players regardless of who they are.
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- 705 Somewhere in this survey there is an implication that personal information may lead to an individual being grieved. The only way that could be possible is if the individual had previously revealed information about themselves. The largest causes of griefing are for enjoyment or a reward. In some games attacking another player of a lower level still rewards you as if you were both the same level. Other cases the victims are in a poor situation.
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- 721 When you have a supportive guild and most of your contact is with/through these people, then it happens very little. You are more likely to fall victim if you are in a situation where you are alone and the odd one out in a new group.
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- 722 Griefers are a bane to gaming, but one we will not see the end to. As long as humans are humans, there will be griefing. Much like there will be bullies (which are what griefers are), war-mongers, racist, etc... Despite this, I believe that the way kids are raised today, on video games full of stupid violence, neglectful parents, sub-standard schools (and not just in the USA), and TV shows uplifting bad behaviors (Sweet Sixteen-type shows) among other factors have greatly increased the rate at which "griefer"-type personalities are built. That is not to say that TV is bad, nor violent video games, it's just that children should not be exposed to that content at such young ages. Especially the content on TV. At least in video games there's something interesting going on that (usually) has nothing to do with the real world, which makes it harder for children to emulate in themselves. My two cents.
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- 726 People get bored or think it is funny to call people names and such
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- 731 People love to do it because once the content has been seen and experienced, there's a lot less to do and people start to get creative in the ways they exploit, hack, scam and abuse people. This is how trolling was born pretty much.
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- 736 Griefers tend to grief for the pleasure of causing another player distress, most of the time it is completely anonymous and just random targeting, or to do with faction. At the launch of a new area in MMORPGs there tends to be a lot of cross faction griefing, so for example lots of horde players will gank alliance players for the sake of causing distress. Most of this happens because people know they are anonymous in the game.
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- 737 As I mentioned earlier, from my personal experiences, there's usually one 'Bad Apple' guild on a server that has such a negative reputation that is validated by their actions, and that guild seems to gain clearance to do as they please, such

as Griefing, Trolling, Harassing, etc. This will bring hostilities out between this 'Bad Apple' guild, usually a higher up raiding guild, and another high end raiding guild who is much more passive and easy going. This seems to run rampant in slightly lesser progressed realms (US- Sentinels) that still are involved with the progression race on Alliance.

738 Being a WoW player who mostly just plays arena and BG's griefing is usually caused by people being frustrated at the skill level or intentional disruption of bgs from other players or due to frustration at losing a BG, I don't see griefing happening too much in arenas since you choose the people you play with and seems rather counterproductive to grief your own personally chosen team.

739 Speaking about World of Warcraft specifically, back when there was no cross-sever PvP, battlegrounds, dungeons etc, the communities used to know people's names and reputations a lot more than now. Back in the first few years of WoW, being Horde and Alliance and a part of specific group made griefing more personal, and you did it because they did it to you, or your guild mates, or because you knew they were straight up jerks. Nowadays, people do it because of anonymity, especially in cross-realm scenarios. People join a dungeon, or a battleground, with a group of people from other servers. They don't know them, they will likely never come across them again, so their behaviour doesn't affect their later gameplay. Back in the day, it would. You'd get a name, and people would target you and make your gaming life hell.

743 The open question should be added to everyone of the previous pages. Do i have something to add, yes. Do i want to add something after 3 pages of questions? No, i actually feel like the author of this survey ignored my need to write something more on related page, so i don't care to go back now.

745 My perception of griefing is that it is usually caused by a person under 18, who has little experience in MMOs. They will try to act as the average peer age, which in turn causes them to look childish and foolish, and subject to griefing, which they will retaliate to. Also, people will get attacked verbally due to hobbies, looks, etc. Guilds should focus people of like mindedness (such as PvP, or casual guilds) and people shouldn't be afraid to leave guilds when they aren't suited for them. Usually, griefing in guild chat occurs when someone tries to fit in when they obviously don't. In these discussions, I stay quiet.

746 I believe one major reason people grief that wasn't mentioned is that some people, at their max level, aren't as good as their fellow players of same level and as such feel the need to kill lower level players or name-call or obstruct other players so that they would feel they aren't weak and unskilled. By griefing other people, they feel they are better then said people.

754 I think griefers are trying to compensate for their 'real' lives. They have trouble with their job or at home, and to compensate for that pain, they wanna hurt other people. To feel more powerful, to have control over others as others have control over them. Other people are just jerks that do it for their personal gain. The trolls of the game. People that annoy everyone, have an elitist attitude (think they are better than everyone) and need to make that known to everyone. It's people like this that wanna make a reputation for themselves as the biggest assholes of the game, and they succeed. They whine about everything. The game sucks, the

mechanics suck, the other players suck, the graphics suck. Yet, they keep playing and keep annoying everyone.

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- 757 Sometimes you get bored, and rustling people's jimmies is a way to entertain yourself.
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- 759 As a long time griever and occasional victim I can tell you it is very varied who gets involved in it, some people will never even think of griefing whereas others like myself will under some circumstances, it is usually about having a laugh using anonymity or the other end of the spectrum desiring to be noticed or known.
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- 774 The targets of griefing are often just randomly chosen.
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- 775 Some people like being 'the bad guy' and to do so they grief other players. In some games I've played (WoW, RIFT) Some Griefers were looked highly upon by other members of their faction. So really it's like High School where the bullies were the 'cool kids' and their victims are the 'nerds'.
-
- 777 Griefers basically try to trivialize, rationalize their wrong behaviors through corruption. A wrong answer to a wrong behavior, both rooted in our ability to provide extraverted causal judgments.
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- 780 I can't really say much about the causes of griefing as that kind of mindset is quite foreign to me.
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- 785 All in accordance with the Greater Internet Fuckwad Theory.
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- 788 A cry for attention born from the fact that the griefers generally have an insufficiently rewarding or in-depth social life. By griefing, the victim at least acknowledges their existence. That's my personal theory, at least.
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- 794 Often they goad/troll others into mistakes or griefing in open forums like Trade Chat to boost their own ego and humiliate in front of others.
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- 798 General rule Griefers = trolls, they are only in it for the reaction
-
- 799 I think a lot of younger kids do it because of anonymity or because they are bored. I've never seen griefing because of someone's sexually orientation or race or stuff like that
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- 800 Some people are just jackasses and do it because they know it makes other people mad.
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- 815 Often, certain classes or in-game races can receive considerable amounts of griefing. An example in Dungeons and Dragons online are Paladins and Rangers, who are the weakest two classes in game. They are often grieved simply for their class. Drow and Warforged melee are as well. Furthermore, due to the tool MyDDO, which allows players to view others' characters as they were at the time they last logged off, they can be harassed over their gear as well. Since U10 made player hit point totals public, that has been a huge source of grief to newer players and some of the classes like Rogue and Bard.
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- 816 Causes of griefing? I'd just like to add that the tears of nerds are delicious. Some kids take their games a little too seriously, and I tend to get my entertainment at their expense.
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- 825 The victim is more like... wrong time wrong place... just random target someone out of frustration be it an in game frustration or a personal thing

- 828 Griefing is more like... wrong place, wrong time... People commit an act of griefing out of 'frustration' from in-game event or something that happened irl.
-
- 834 I think the causes mostly stem from the issues surrounding power and the gay bashing is more about humiliation than homophobia, but I don't know for sure. Considering that the community in real life is considered as "nerds" and thus the lack of power there is translated to virtual world where they are able to succeed and have more control and power.
-
- 836 It's essentially the anonymity of the internet; that is all it comes down to. Folks are able to act out in ways they otherwise would not be able to in a real social setting. It may also be generational - my generation (millennials) has grown up on cable TV, video games, cell phones etc. We do not possess the etiquette of past generations.
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- 844 The griefing I see or hear about occurring often seems to have a social component, in that many griefers seem to believe their actions impress other players. Griefing behavior may raise one's standing in his or her social circle (or perceive to do so) and therefore seems to share some similarities with behavior like boasting about getting drunk at a party or picking on socially awkward people.
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- 849 Griefing has become an art form, an expression of a gamers desire to create their own mark in a world of structure and rules. Finding out ways/things to do that no one else can or will do is unique. And as human beings, we desire to be unique/apart from the masses. Griefers are no different. At the end of the day, in the depths of the psyche, all a griever wants is to carve his name into the virtual world, and get his jollies off it.
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- 850 One variable I think would be conducive to griefing is boredom.
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- 855 Motivations and tools are well-known. The problem lies in actual intention, context and surroundings. An act may be set in stone, but how is it perceived changes all the time. Sometimes a finger burnt bonds friendship, respect and spirit of fair competition. However, not always, and not with everyone. What we want and what we actually do, here goes the material for your new survey, I hope.
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- 858 Griefing is one of the few things that most people remember strongly because they're emotionally attached to the experience. I personally believe this is the biggest reason I like griefing, and being grieved. It's fun to talk about it when your friends at a later date.
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- 859 Sometimes people just get bored and want to be destructive in a harmless* way (a la releasing Godzilla in Sim City) for entertainment *They think it's harmless cos nobody physically gets hurt.
-
- 865 it's funny; that is 99% of my motivation. If it backfires on me, then it's even more fun! If it doesn't, it was still fun anyway. :U
-
- 871 people just troll cuz they are bored and like to see a negative reaction out of somebody
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- 875 When it comes to ganking, I myself have done it do other players, however I would not consider it griefing because I specifically don't like that kind of behavior. So if I were to kill someone (most likely because of their faction) I only will bother them once and then leave them alone. When people start to 'camp'

and interrupt another person's gameplay, then it becomes a problem. Most people I knew did not encourage people to play like that and would not do it themselves, unless it was out of retaliation.

895 Where did griefing begin? There's no record of it in Neverwinter, so was it EQ on PvP servers? Or was it in the EQ2/WoW generation?

896 I find two major kinds of griefing: anon griefing and planned griefing. The first relates to bored or sadistic individuals who are looking for a kick, either by pure breakage or the reaction ensured by said breakage. The planned variety though usually pop up when a player/group feel threatened, and decide to knock the opponent down a notch. It could be personal, as in targeting members of a specific guild, or it could be varied, as in the griefer wants to be the best and so shoves others down.

897 If anything, though demographics can be studied with regard to griefing, it really comes down to this: A higher level or better player can gain something from another, weaker player by repetitively killing them or depriving them of something online. If the griefer has nothing to gain in the slightest, then they are likely bored, or a dick. Anonymity is probably the biggest reason for this, considering that there are no repercussions for your actions (most of the time). Consider this: you're playing Xbox with your friends, in a private lobby of some Call Of Duty or Halo game. You know a glitch in the map that you exploit and rain death from above over and over and over again, for no other reason than to piss your mates off. They get annoyed over voice chat or something, and you stop. Perhaps they get very annoyed and log off on you for an hour or refuse to play with you for a while. Now remove the friend element, and none of the consequences apply. The person might rage and leave, but so what? They could be miles away on the other side of the world and it wouldn't even matter, because they don't know who you are! Anonymity, that's all it is.

903 I believe one of the main reasons griefing occurs is the fact that there is that veil of anonymity

907 I play Darkfall, which is a full loot PvP centered game. Almost all of the griefing that happens in that game is the result of clan wars and is totally fine. There has been new players that were grieved in the past, but through player vigilantism, pretty much all griefers have stopped their activities and have either quit the game or moved on to other things. I mostly grief to teach a lesson to other rival players that have a cocky attitude until they beg for mercy, but I've also grieved some newer players on occasion for personal enjoyment. After a while though I wouldn't grief new players but instead target other griefers until they stopped. Griefing in that game mostly consists of bind camping people, ganking them at mob spawn, and destroying their city repeatedly until they surrender.

918 I enjoy griefing players because evoking emotion from other players through a game is hard. In the games I played you can destroy everything another clan builds and it is fun to attack my rivals.

919 I believe that most people grief in MMOs do to the fact that for most of the people who plays these games on a regular basis don't have much of a life outside of the game. That is where they place their self-worth and belittling people in this fictional world with little to know consequence makes them feel stronger.

- 927 I don't have the idea that griefing is really caused by anything on general basis. Sure you have the grieving of gay's or ethnicity or whatever, but that's no difference in real life. Most griefers do so since for them its entertainment. And to be honest: gaming is about having fun. Grievers have fun while grieving. Second to that it seems that most Dev's don't really bother with rooting out the grievers account-wide, enhancing the problem
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- 931 First of all I play on a RP-PvE shard in Rift mainly to avoid griefing/etc, so I don't see it that often since most on a RP shard are more mature in nature/behaviour. People play games for entertainment, and I believe that griefers are entertainment by the act of grieving. They generally like it, and enjoy it, and therefore, for them, it is a game. That is the reason why I never get offended that easily by the sorts. Solution is simple: /ignore do believe that the Dev's of the multiple MMO's do too little against them. Sometimes they ban a toon, but it would be far more appropriate to ban an account and IP-address
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- 932 Some people grief because they have problems in the real world, and they take it out online, on other players
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- 935 My character is on a PvP server and I enjoy PvP. I enjoy PvP in the sense that I relish fighting others at the same gear level and beating them - I like the feeling of outsmarting an equally geared opponent and using skill to win. Indeed I have witnessed griefing, participated in it (regretfully and very rarely due to guild pressure) and feebly attempted to stop it. It is interesting to see the psychological taunting and frustration people put themselves through in the daily PvP areas. There are respectful players. However, I feel the majority of griefers are within the 17-25 age bracket, most likely male, and the motivation behind it to be an outlet to vent frustrations they may have in their own lives. Asserting their power over others and feeling like they are in control perhaps. There is an interesting incident I'd like to tell you about. In an isolated zone where many players do not frequent, I went afk for 5 minutes or so. Of course I know the implications of doing so on a PvP server but had no time to log out and didn't really care at the time. I came back to another player trying to kill me. I was just about to die until I used 2 cooldowns that saved my life and I proceeded to kill him without hesitation. The interesting part was when he respawned he stood right next to me, doing nothing for quite a while. I tried to engage conversation with him and he didn't respond. I was being nice and saying, 'don't feel guilty it's a PvP server'. I was trying to figure out why he just stood by me doing nothing. We both knew I could have easily killed him again as it was clearly apparent I outgeared him by a significant margin. I then mounted and dismounted and he copied me, which confirmed to me he wasn't a bot. I think he was overcome with guilt and didn't know what to do being caught in the act of unfairly attacking a player. In my personal opinion, I think people feel guilty at times but they cannot control themselves while they partake in the act of griefing.
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- 938 Generally speaking the type of griefing i witness are lollers, people who specifically target role-players and try to disrupt their role-play either by dancing naked, jumping around on top of them, setting off spell effects or even by pretending to be a role-player but taking the piss with their characters however on a more global scale i would say the main cause of griefing is gender with woman

being told make sandwiches and so on as well as player level, simply because they're easy targets.

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- 942 grieving happen cause it's fun. and happens more these days cause whiney little carebear pussys go on and on at devs so they can live in their little candyfloss wrapped world. and devs crack. There are no victims anymore.
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- 944 Griefing is often caused by the fact that you are anonymous and often on internet less afraid of arguing and in most cases not willing to apologize or admit you were wrong. People are acting confident and are rude because "they are right and if you don't agree you are retarded" which of course leads to more arguing... Oh the internet discussions on mmorpg :) Everyone that plays less/knows less than me and noobs and everyone that plays more/knows more are geeks is the saying, and its true in most cases.
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- 945 I think Children spend so much time interacting in a game combined with lack of the real life experiences to develop a real understanding of accepting differences in others. Often I believe low self-esteem and lack of parental support/interaction leaves children to seek acceptance or find release for low self-esteem in MMORPG. Perhaps some people even feel powerless in real life and in a mmorpg they can gain some sense of power even if only over another player.
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- 947 Due to the ganking I, personally, experienced on a PvP server, I will no longer create a toon on PvP servers. I now only play on PvE servers.
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- 951 The point of griefing is to get an emotional response, whining, complaining, crying on forums. That increases the fun for the griever, you know you've annoyed them enough for them to bother to cry about it. And that's why you target them. You don't care who or what they are, you just care that they care. and the people that care too much are the most fun to grieve, all the other is secondary, just as most of the questions in this survey is really below par for a PHD study, but then It is philosophy, so you can't expect much from it...
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- 952 Sometimes it appears as if people just grief because they can, they do not think of the consequences or that there is another person behind the other character.
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- 960 i think "trolling" or griefing persist, because the game studios are famously reluctant to permanently ban accounts. The financial side of the MMO business drives game studios to try not to turn players away... even if the player SHOULD be turned away. Gamers know this and it furthers the feeling of a consequence free environment.
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- 964 As I said previously, plenty of players grief whoever they can get away with griefing, whenever they can. Targets of opportunity if you will. The mindset of individuals resembles a small child with no one to play with. They do not get the companionship or respect that they crave so they grief as a means of getting attention. As a lover of open world (no rules) games I've dealt with plenty of them as allies, enemies, or neutrals, and this attitude is fairly universal. True "bad guy" griefers that go out of their way to ruin someone else's life are far and away a rare breed, thank god.
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- 967 The most egregious griefing I have ever witnessed in game has been harassment in chat. Some players are downright vicious in attacking (bullying) those they think are "weaker". It's easier for them to do this than trying to "outplay" someone via game mechanics. Although PvP (particularly in games where the other

player's name is displayed to the opposing side) tends to bring out the worst grieving (corpse spawning, aiming for / killing the same player over and over again.) I've also noticed in over 13 years of MMO play, one very significant piece of data: in a game like DAoC, where reputation on the server absolutely impacted a player's ability to play the game (where the community was everything... where grouping for both PvE and PvP was essential ... in essence.. solo play did not really exist), only found TWO instances of grieving in a 5 year spawn, across 2 servers. Compared to other games such as WoW (for instance) which are individual-focused (and where play is self-focused with a loot-centric design that rewards players for their INDIVIDUAL achievements even to the point of competing at the expense of their fellow guild mates)... I have found those games that promote loot and status reward have a correlation of higher levels of grieving (at an almost consistent on-going weekly incident level.) Does community-oriented play inhibit grieving? Does self-focused play generate grieving or just provide more opportunities? Correlation does not prove causation, but my experience as a pattern-thinking social scientist confirms that the combination of removing restraints and consequences has a major impact on the amount of grieving that occurs. Good luck with your research! ^_^

972 I honestly think that people who grief do so because of an underlying issue in their real life; whether it be that they are preyed upon themselves or feel worthless everywhere but inside the game environment.

975 Whenever I grief, it's usually because I'm playing with friends, or I'm alone and perceive the target as a threat.

981 Posing as a guild/clan/faction leader who's account was hacked. Making a username appearing as the original guild leader substituting lowercase L for capital I or O for 0 in the username. Many "second in command" high ranking members will believe you and give you your new character a high rank which gives you access to their clan/guild bank or safe house where you steal everything. There's an entire blog of a guy who does it to dozens of clans who fall for it and he takes years' worth of harvested loot. Finding someone macroing their skills with resources afk, sabotaging their progress without killing them using game mechanics for the purpose of not letting them advance their progress to compete with you. Tricking people numerous ways. Someone asks for a rune to travel to city X, you say I have one for cheap, sell it to them, it goes to a stuck location or a dragon spawn where they instantly die, sometimes dead on an island and can't continue playing for an hour or more. Debuffing people in games where it doesn't flag you as criminal. You simply follow someone around who's training, and debuff them repeatedly. Heal the monster they're fighting when the person is weak, even if it makes you a criminal they likely won't attack you if they're at low health with a monster also attacking them, if they do you get an easy kill.

982 Griefing as you call it is a game mechanic, if it had not been intended the game would not be designed that way, I play GW2 and a few other games where this is not even possible. I enjoy hunting other players for the simple joy of enraging them or scaring them, after all if you want to do word PvP Fear is your greatest weapon, you want people to fear you. The question I ask is what is exactly wrong

with that in a game designed in a fantasy setting with PVP enabled? Is this not sort of like complaining that the ghosts attack you in pacman?

983 People do it because it's usually done in a way that's allowed in game, but sucks to be part of. While I don't do it, I don't get upset about it either. I for instance don't consider player ganking grieving. It's PvP. The strong take on the weak to keep them weak or to feel stronger than they are.

986 Not much.

987 You have not really touched on the game forums, but this is a place of a lot of grieving, personal insults, attacks and vehement attacks

989 It's in our nature, a necessary evil. And having it on the Internet, where nobody can really get hurt, is a really good thing.

992 People grief other people for all the causes you listed. The enabling cause is they are anonymity. Thanks to this they will also grief to feel powerful and for any other gain or just to be rude, but it all falls back to the anonymity.

1001 People take video games too serious. Lots of people simply play no different than they played single player SNES games. You do what it takes to win the game. The conversion of games to the online realm simply meant people are unfair to real players instead of computer AIs. But, you shouldn't play a game that challenges and verses other people if you are accepting that you could be beat down and pulverized. Before I played MMO's I played the FPS community. All we had were simple golden rules like "don't cheat, shooting people who are typing is lame etc". But half of the fun was completely humiliating and owning the other player. We were all friends and it was usually all in fun. What MMO's call grieving, used to be considered gameplay. In an FPS game is it grieving when a player got shut down 20 v -1? No, the player chose to enter a competitive game and simply met a higher opponent. I don't see how doing what is needed to 'win' in a player vs. player scenario slide into the realm of grieving. If you ask me it is a made up term created by sore losers. You win some, you lose some, and it's a video game. I have never been grieved, because any half-intelligent person can always find a way out of the situation. It is really ridiculous overall. People are not grieved; they are helpless and will whine till blue in the face. Really don't know what happened to the gaming communities overall. Any grieving anyone can attempt to do to me in an MMORPG is pale in comparison to what a good player playing by the rules does in an FPS game. The whole term disgusts me and even more so to try and link it to some psychological aspect. When I was a kid, it was adults telling me games are fiction and not real. Now that I am an adult, the older adults are so convinced video games are real. They connect psychological ways/methods to types of gameplay. That just defies how I was raised. Sure people talk trash in MMO's, I hardly hear anything I wouldn't hear on a middle school basketball court.

1005 In some games, let's use Ultima Online, depending on where you are, ie in a dungeon, others might assume you have something of quality on you or other valuables. Because what you are killing drops rares or a lot of gold. Some games, you are in a starter guild. This is also a give a way. Some games have newbie islands or starting cities. This is where grieving will go down.

1007 griefing sometimes happen without the griever realizing that he is doing such thing. It ends then, griefing is a matter of perception and each player interprets an event totally dependent on their personal circumstances.

1009 At least in the games I've played, the player's persona in game or outside of the game have almost nothing to do with the griever's choice to grief that person. Unless it's in specific incidences where a griever targets someone because of personal distaste, most griefers just go after whoever they can grief.

1017 Most of what I see is on PvP servers and is ganking, the other is in games that allow players to level lock, in designated PvP zones, you get a band of twinks causing misery for anyone who chooses not to level lock. On rare occasion I have been attack simply for being gay and RPing that fact openly (not explicitly, just holding hands or hugging my in game partner.) I expect that, though getting better, there are still those who hate homosexuality and, some are of a mindset to do more than just tell me they don't like it in an MMO. Much the same as real life, there is a minority that is going to hassle me, in or out of game, simply because while I don't flaunt being gay, I don't hide it either.

1018 Having never suffered from or partaken in, griefing, it is difficult for me to comment upon it. My answers are based upon my own assumptions of what motivates a griever and not on any actual experience.

1019 A lot of the time the Griever is bored and has got nothing to do so picks on the little guy, hoping a challenge will appear. Also, a lot of people grief when they're leaving a game since they've nothing to lose in terms of becoming infamous with his action. Also, most people consider things I don't griefing. If there is a profanity filter, or heck, you're online, cussing shouldn't be an issue. How explicit a game is in terms of sexuality, blood, violence, or how revealing the characters are, are often altered due to real life griefing by religions and politicians trying to tell people how to live their lives and what they deem appropriate. Religions and Politics have no right to tell an art/entertainment how it should be. There are ESRB ratings and if you don't like the content of a game, don't try to alter it, just simply don't play it. Attempting to alter it is RL Griefing. Thanks for taking the time to read my chunk 'o thought. Cheerio!

1020 I think that 90% of the time those that grief over anything that happens in a MMORPG are taking the game to serious and those around them see it and abuse this aspect for personal enjoyment. It's not a logic thing to do, grief over pixels in a game and yet a lot of people do it. Also a game is called a game because it's not something serious and it's there to fill your time and make you happy, although people suffer extended abuse from their guild members and still stick in that environment, even though they are free to leave. These people are more commonly known as "Drama Queens" and they take abuse so that they can complain to their friends about it and portray themselves like a victim and receive attention from them. I've been a "hardcore" player for more than 7 years and I never tolerated that kind of behavior, thus I never became a target of griefing. I can separate the concept of a game from the real life. On the other hand I do abuse people that I find weak, and I believe those people are just as weak in their real lives as they are in game.

1030 Griefing kicks ass

- 1031 - Any griefing done by insults or spam, has an easy fix (Block) so i don't consider them real griefing.- One of the biggest cause for players to get griefed is, they allow it. When you show that you are vulnerable, griefers take pleasure in that, and laugh
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- 1034 Players target other players when there is any open chance to take advantage of it. Essentially it goes back to the basic methods of the pecking-order (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pecking_order).
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- 1038 I have seen in games where Griefing has been targeted and deliberate. It was used as a tool by certain guilds to essentially force people to quit playing the game solely to remove competition via harassment, kill stealing, false reporting etc
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- 1041 I feel like the game you're currently playing determines what constitutes griefing. For example, if I was playing Rift and get killed after a fight and I'm on low health... that's essentially griefing -- there's no personal gain to come out of it aside from satisfaction. Games like Mortal Online and EVE Online, by contrast, provide incentive to kill another player and to take every advantage you can get. Scamming, killing and all-around despicable behaviour is practically part of the games and the challenge is to learn to overcome or mitigate those setbacks.
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- 1049 griefing is usually done by someone been an as or troll or someone who is insecure most times. But i have personally seen instances where the griefing is done because someone has an serious issue with a particular gender.in my case it was because I'm a girl and this guy had serious issues in rl with women and tried to attack a girl in 50 chat and said it was ok and that she liked it. I was an officer in that guild at the time and the guild had lots of female members at the time and they were also on at the time and i called him out on it. Told him it was unacceptable to do this and he flipped out and started going off on the women and me in the guild. Which led to a g kick and reporting to the mods. In the game i play i don't see much serious griefing like that often in game chat or ever, it's a rare thing I hear. I play rift btw. teasing and mild griefing goes on so you have to learn to ignore most of the chat as its just people being stupid and the best way to dealing with them is to ignore them and they go away pretty quick. Seldom does it get that bad. I have had only one other time when i was griefed really bad and it led to the gamer been banned from the game for a bit. He said something dumb in 50 chat and I called him out jokingly and he flipped out, not knowing anything about me he then proceeded to go off on how i was a fat horrible gay black person, use all kinds of slurs, very venomous, so he was reported by myself and several other unknown players that night. People who do things like this do it because they can get away with it.
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- 1050 People want to feel strong, great about themselves. They've lack of morals or/and not satisfied with their real life.
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- 1052 One player could be helping another with a question, then a Griefer sees the opportunity to turn the words around & make the helper look horrible just to make the Griefer make themselves feel good.
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- 1056 I believe griefing is perpetuated in part by the anonymity of the internet. People may say things to others through the internet they might not say if face to face with that person. While it is not a MMORPG, Iracing (a racing simulator) requires

users to use their real name and helps guarantee this by using the name on the credit card used for subscribing to the service. A person's level of maturity also accounts for some griefing. Just because a person is older does not mean they are any less childish and petty.

1060 griefing rarely implies by game, unless incorporated by another hostile player towards someone well liked in their guild, they grief just to be shrewd and mean spirited

1062 I believe it's the fact that you can do it and get away with it. There's no feasible repercussions.

1063 In one of the MMORPGs I played, EVE Online, there are very lax rules on griefing, and griefing being "part of the game" is an accepted state of affairs by most players. The game is intended to be more of a sandbox than most, and so griefing/scamming/etc for personal gain is seen as a legal (if looked down-upon) method of advancement. Corporations (guilds) are able to make large amounts of in-game money through organised, large-scale griefing. In addition to the tangible benefits, a lot of people believe that such events make the game more interesting as a whole.

1069 Behaviour that can be seen as griefing depends on the game in which it occurs. For instance in a game like EVE Online acts that in this survey are described as griefing are part of the game. In this setting ganking, scamming and betraying other players for personal gain is accepted and considered normal by both the community of players and the developers. This is different in a game like World of Warcraft where players of the same faction are supposed to cooperate and cannot freely engage in combat. This leads from what I have seen to different forms of griefing where players are more verbally abusive. Verbal insults can then range from attacks based on the player's skill level, presumed sexual orientation or ethnicity. I think griefing that happens in WoW can be more intrusive and offensive than griefing that happens in EVE.

1073 In my current MMO (RIFT) griefing could be witnessed with increased frequency since all European players (French/German/English) are forced to play together. Servers are separated by language, but for some of the content all those servers are put together. That causes a lot of griefing with the background of racism.

1076 In my personal opinion the (relative) anonymity of MMORPG's is the most driving factor, even though the reason or cause may be something else or specific. With the exception of those that would only find enjoyment in a game while griefing. I believe that in many cases a smaller action or occurrence turns into griefing due to the anonymity, sometimes even with the griefer not actually aware of the fact that his actions are considered griefing by the target or any other in the vicinity.

1079 when talking PvP, if you don't kill them first they will kill you, it's still griefing but really there's no big reasoning behind it. You get some and you give some it's all fair even though when I get griefed it sucks LOL but it's part of the game and I like that part.

1083 Aside from scammers who do it for in-game gain such as accounts, items, or currency I find most griefing is done by people who, like me, just feel like it in a way. If I see something, and it's too obvious for me to ignore and I feel like

messing with someone... well, I will do it. But I don't enter a game and say to myself "I am going to grief someone today."

1087 Sociopathic behaviour is the main force behind griefing. Very rarely the cause is genuinely wanting to have a few laughs with some anonymous people, but sometimes it happens and can forge a bond. A lot of griefing is now based on chat/forums harassment, it is now so common in MMORPGs that players who are mindful seem to be the exception. Griefing was much less prevalent in old games (even shooters) and the quality of griefing was often funnier and more sophisticated, so much that some griefers were well liked members of the community. They added to the enjoyment of other players and it was all done in good fun, like actors incarnating the villains in a movie. The trend in online games changed fast in the early 2000's from my point of view. A lot of griefing has to do with fake virtual representations and not the games themselves; the narcissism/egoism and ignorance of the griefers are the main causes.

1091 The company's failure to adequately enforce their own Terms of Service (TOS) or End User License Agreement (EULA). Often the griever would be reported only to have the company do nothing, say it wasn't actually griefing or the non-answer of "we will investigate it further". If griefers knew that there was a penalty for their actions, many would be less likely to do it.

1093 I think there is a percentage of people who play mmorpgs for nothing but the ability to disrupt another's game play. For them they find it hilarious and it gives them a self of self-worth and makes them feel more superior.

1098 The motivations of griefing may evolve in time, as an example, starting from simply faction induced and evolving into fame induced. In other cases, people that have never been griefers can become it just due to boring or for the impossibility of do anything else in the game, as an example those that would like to join a group but are playing during low peak times.

1101 Generally when griefing, my targets are random. However, in just about every game that i have played there have been certain guilds that i don't like. Sometimes just competition. Sometimes they are all dicks. I will always attack players of that guild. Even if i am alone vs. 2 of them. I play PvP realms because i like to gank and be ganked. I like to become better at the game by fighting multitudes of different players with different play styles. I rarely grief for the sake of griefing. If i am not motivated to kill a player by their guild name, i am usually griefing in retaliation to another players dickhole actions.

1107 While I have done a little kill-stealing and such I have only done so in retaliation. I've never been clear on exactly why someone would knowingly interrupt a group or event, but I've seen that happen plenty of times. The personal 'alpha male' attitude that some griefers show in broadcast chat tells me they're immature and ineffectual in their real life.

1117 Mainly due to the anonymity of the internet, without consequences seems to be in the majority of why people grief.

1126 I believe that many griefers think they are hilarious, and that they believe their brand of sarcastic, asshole humor is hilarious to everyone around them. When these douchebags see each other in a game, they naturally start forming guilds

and alliances and keep on spreading their asshat attitudes and scumbag tendencies with more frequency since they have jackasses backing them up.

1133 To be clear, grieving does not bother me at all. It is only a problem to those who are immature and should not be playing the game in the first place. Those who grief usually are just bored, and looking for kicks. It's rather easy to avoid griefers and anyone who thinks that there need to be some sort of law passed by the state needs to learn that that nothing coming from anyone in the game matters.

1135 it is fun and i enjoy pissing people off

1141 Simply being there when the griever wants to have "fun"

1157 The #1 cause of griefing is young, idiot players in the 12-15 demographic, doing so because they can.

1163 MMOs that are global in nature (i.e. players from all over the world play on the same servers) tend to show more grieving toward other nationalities. I've experienced and witnessed NA and EU players grieving JP players based on character name alone, the opposite is true. I truly support servers that contain players of all over as a way to break that shallow minded thought process.

1164 i mainly only grief people of the other faction as i get very patriotic

1166 I'm one of the few Transsexual players you will find in MMORG's I've been grieved plenty when I revealed that I was once a man. I rarely tell people about it these days do to what has happened in the past. As for being Grieved in game one of the other things was being grieved so other teams or players could get pops for monsters that drooped rare items or money. I've also grieved the RMT (Real Money Traders) in game because they had so monopolized the pop monsters we needed to get to accomplish tasks rather than having to pay them for the drops. I've also secretly reported for one developer during the RMT wars as they called it.

1168 It's purely based on the presumption of anonymity. Very few people in society are that emotionally reactive in the "real world" and the few that are, are labelled as problems (road rage)

1178 It's one of those things that's hard to distinguish for me from the normal competitive environment. If I deliberately try to kill a mob I know someone else wants to kill, is it really grieving if we both need to kill it for whatever mission/quest/whatever we are on? Grey area and such...

1182 For most gamers, online gaming is anonymous, and for some people, rather than mindless taking out their stress on AIs, taking it out on real people in a manner that causes said people no physical harm can help them deal with those urges violent everyone gets from time to time, after a long day of dealing with unintelligent people. It can also act as a false form of confidence for younger players who have gotten to the point where they are able to grief other people, rather than be grieved themselves. In all, though, it's just another side effect of anonymity; humanity rears its ugly side when it needs not fear the social repercussions.

1183 Attacking someone or going to war with them is not grieving. In a sandbox game with player made structures, towns ect, deliberately destroying enemy sites is not grieving as well, you are at war with that guild/faction. However "cheap" tactics like spawn camping are grieving. In a sandbox game, destroying player

made structures which are not a threat to you or belong to a new players, or just plain burning anything in sight, would qualify as griefing. Griefing is done for the following reasons (most of the time):- Easy in game profit (ex. targeting new players)- Personal enjoyment- You resent the target- Retaliation/Revenge, to send a message to enemies- Sometimes it occurs as a part of warfare and is not intentional.

F.5 Do you have anything else to add regarding the magnitude and frequency of griefing?

- 3 I think people reach a state, after being grieved, where they feel they are being bullied. Once you get to that point, it's easy to see everyone as the enemy, which is a dangerous mental state to be in. People do not generally feel empathy for those they consider an enemy, and if everyone is considered an enemy, then anyone can become another victim.
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- 6 I'm having a bit of trouble with your survey. So scamming I see a lot, but you'd have to be an idiot to fall for it. But if you did fall for it, it might be devastating enough for a person to quit the game over. I'm tainting the fuck out of your results, but whatever
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- 14 I played WoW on a Role Playing PVP server. However, I never encountered anyone who was role playing. Everyone was shouting immersion-breaking things in chat about selling gear or even real world politics. There was no environment conducive to role playing.
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- 15 I would say griefing is a bit rarer these days than in older MMOs such as UO or EQ. Either that or griefing is much harder to spot. I think that may become the case as the population or MMORPG players grow.
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- 19 Stop being pussies.
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- 28 It's part of the game if you can't handle it you have more problems than people being mean to you in a virtual world.
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- 29 Again, people who view what others say online in an anonymous format as personal attacks, are a bit delusional. They imagine that the "griever" as you put it, somehow knows them intimately and react as such, representing a painful misinterpretation of the event. A game is a game, and either it is competitive and encourages that mindset, or it doesn't. It's a society, in that the environment usually has the greatest psychological influence on the participants.
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- 34 Anonymity definitely affects how responsible/civil one may act, and there will always be players that grief/etc even if there is a small/limited community. In World of Warcraft there have been a handful of changes over the years I've experienced which have their benefits and drawbacks. It's not only remaining anonymous but also the format that promotes griefing with natural competition (PvE and PvP) and impersonal communication (compared to talking face to face or even on the phone) it's up to the perspective/interpretation of each player. Which can be misunderstanding what they read based on how they view the other player plus the situation (more likely to view someone who takes many items, even if everyone else lacks interest in those items, as being selfish even though there is no verbal objection or intent to be selfish). Making PvP maps that pool people from multiple servers instead of their own server is great as it reduced the queue time, but it trimmed back open world PvP (
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- 46 Griefing tends to happen a lot primarily with verbal harassment, and can range from moderate degrading to extreme verbal harassment. Extreme verbal

harassment does not happen that often, but moderate verbal degrading happens many times, usually in the same event.

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- 48 The harassment in chat channels alone is enough to alter the emotional state of most people, regardless of what the defenders say ('grow a thick skin, just ignore it, etc'). The 'tolerated' amounts of trash talking, insulting, and so forth can make logging into a game a stressor itself when a game is intended to be used to escape stress, and that's before one has even started a play session.
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- 59 Mob camping is a questionable category, as some games such as EverQuest actually promote that due to the way itemization is handled. In that game, for example, most items only drop from one specific mob; ergo, if you want that item, you MUST kill that mob. As that mob spawns in one specific dungeon in one specific place, that means that camping (usually for hours, days, or weeks) is required in order to acquire that item.
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- 72 I do not really think kill stealing is griefing as it is normal part of PvP matches
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- 80 I think that High or Extreme acts of griefing will often result in a "counter-grief" and can start a downward spiral for all involved to the point that even the person who was originally an innocent victim needs to be removed from the server. The only time I've ever seen this not happen was once when the counter stroke was on such a massive scale that the griefer was scared of what would happen next if they did anything else.
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- 93 Stop being pussies. Cyber bullying is such a farce. I will not believe that any amount of "Verbal abuse" or "scamming" can affect some tosser across the globe substantially.
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- 101 The enforcement of rules in any MMORPG is very hit and miss, especially considering how many players involved in griefing know the system well enough to exploit loopholes. With this in mind, griefing often gets very out of hand on certain servers, especially if many of the players seeking to stamp it out are hunted down, silenced or driven away.
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- 103 Griefing will certainly drive a person off a game. I've quit a few MMOs because of mechanics that encourage griefing. (I wouldn't say griefing or griefers, as because of the mechanics, someone will ALWAYS be griefing, while in other games with different mechanics, griefing is a non-issue.)
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- 105 I think that once in a while as a joke is acceptable as long as it is "low intensity."
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- 127 The magnitude and frequency also depends on what you perceive as low/extreme and rare/frequent. Players who gets offended easily should not play in an environment where griefer is naturally present to some sort of extend, like PvP realms/servers. As there are only two ways to get out: grow mentally and stay away, emotionally talking, from the game, OR become a griefer to feel better.
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- 135 I think you should also consider something like quality not quantity. Like the difference between killing a quest mob someone wants over and over again to one rare mob that they nearly killed.
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- 145 I've quit games due to the level of griefing. Some I have played for weeks before quitting but in some cases I have tried a game for less than 30 minutes before writing it off. These are the open PvP Full Loot games where you create a new character and are almost instantly targeted by high level players out to ruin your

day. I now avoid this kind of game and have stopped playing on PvP ruleset servers due to the level of idiocy.

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- 151 This is getting rather tricky - I've been playing MMOs for a long time, and across many games. A lot of griefing behaviour is discouraged if a game/server has a decent community - where reputation matters a griefer can rapidly find themselves being isolated. This holds true for smaller communities but is lost among larger ones. As a result, the level of griefing one is exposed to is largely dependent on the type of game you're playing and your server community. I've been answering in broad strokes as a result. I know there are some players who cannot tolerate even what I'd consider normal PvP smack talk and consider it harassment, so I'm only answering for me.
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- 157 Gamers that have been into online gaming for a long time develop a thick skin. It has worn me down to the point where very often I do not even care anymore about griefers. I still find the verbal attacks to be the worst, as it is for me the only thing that really transcends the 'virtual' and into reality. Game items, the loss of time or insults hurled at my avatar do not really concern me. It's somewhere else. However, when someone questions my skill or my competence, I'll often end up getting annoyed and taking it back out on that player.
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- 164 While it seems fairly prevalent, I think that it is a very vocal, visible minority that engage in such activities. The millions of other 'normal' players will get on with their day-to-day gaming, but of course it's quite natural that instances of bad behaviour stick out in our minds/memories. In much the same way that we only remember the really horrible days at work clearly, or that really obnoxious customer that we had to deal with that one time, the mundane stuff fades into the background.
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- 167 As for me, I just /ignore them and don't care.
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- 173 define emotional state/in game behaviour, for example after being ganked on a little character by someone much higher u simply log your own high character and beat the living daylights out of them and corpse camp them back
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- 174 This is incredibly subjective. My idea of low level griefing may not be someone elses and my tolerance will be very different.
-
- 198 I have no idea about the "average" player in this last part, so I've answered for myself. For the griefing performed myself, it is almost entirely all either retaliation (verbal harassment) or griefing amongst friends (kill stealing, team disruption). I don't think I saw anything which explicitly mentioned that joke griefing friends didn't count....
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- 202 People usually do this when they've been playing bad and want to feel good again.
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- 203 It is a video game you best grow a thick skin. I find folks tend to harass folks on the internet due to them not being in person. If you get all worked up over a video game get a boat and go fishing you don't belong in that environment anyway. I took the survey to see what the deal was. I just cannot understand how folks can have emotional problems over a video game. I have enough real life problems to deal with and video games ease that.
-
- 218 Intensity depends greatly on the particular game being played. Games encourage the behavior due to mechanics while others discourage it. In some

games, some forms of griefing may not even be possible, such as player blocking when there is no collision detection or gigantic mounts that players can park on top of mailboxes, making them inaccessible. Server can also be a factor. Some servers are designated as RPG servers, which tend to attract griefers whose only purpose in life is to attack other players engaged in RP. On non-RPG servers, there is of course, less RP-ing happening, so less chance to grief them. Also, griefers would split their time among others griefing activities instead of devoting themselves to pestering RP-ers, so the intensity of the type of griefing would be lower, even if all other incidents of griefing might be higher overall.

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- 219 Magnitude of ganking has insufficient answers. By using the word isolated in two responses you really end up making them the same. Several Isolated incidents or Frequent isolated incidents would have been better as multiple incidents which is a lot different than continuous.
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- 224 I usually stay away from FFA PVP games (tho not always), I am pretty sure i would be target/witness of much more of it if I played those.
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- 226 Continuous repeated incidents
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- 253 Verbal harassment is by far the most common kind of griefing, as it generally involves spur-of-the-moment insults and exchanges that take little planning. However, it can often be the worst kind, as some people know precisely how to hurt others in ways that will provoke an immediate and extreme emotional reaction. When one player has a grudge against another and attempts to report him or her fail, the continuing abuse can be enough to seriously impact a person's behavior. I nearly quit playing Guild Wars because one person went out of his way to insult me whenever possible.
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- 258 This question seems a little obvious. I think the biggest difference will lie with whether or not the player also experiences "griefing" irl.
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- 263 Look, that last question just begs for a row of radio buttons going from top left to bottom right. But it depends on the person, and on how griefing is handled by the mods/GM/CSR/other players, and a million other things. There is no average player. And these days, there is no average game.
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- 267 The possibility of griefing also depends on what type of server or game you are playing. For example, it is much easier to grief fellow players on PvP servers and games like Aion or WoW that are divided into factions will create more player conflict and griefing.
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- 270 Tend to see a lot of harassment and spamming the most.
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- 271 I really haven't got the faintest idea how to answer this one. I just haven't seen enough griefing to be able to give a good answer!
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- 273 Common sense, courtesy, and a full knowledge that there are real people behind the avatars has become sorely lacking in today's society.
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- 287 Magnitude & frequency and how it impacts any single player is one of the reasons it's so hard to deal with griefing. What might set a person off one day, might also be something they completely blow off on another day and what might bother one person intensely might not bother another at all. A 'good' griefer often uses this to defend themselves, because if it obviously doesn't bother them, why would it bother you?

- 290 griefing happens daily and a lot in most MMO's. Especially because parents these days show little to no responsibility raising their kids, as well as society as a whole finds it acceptable to be a complete asshole and thieving bastard, in game as well as in real life.
-
- 292 Some type of griefing are less prone to impact behavior / emotional state than others (gold seller spamming is an annoyance, being corpse camped by a higher level player is quite different)
-
- 302 the few extreme scamming even I witnessed (because done by an IG "friend" of mine), the griefer got temporarily banned from the game and the support service "reverted" the scam. Also I've been playing only in a "guild" environment for the last 2 years, so the "ninja" I witnessed was mainly during the 2 years I played "with random players" from 4 to 2 years ago.
-
- 304 Griefing is honestly viewed as "normal" to the point where game developers must actively anticipate the possibility of griefing to prevent it, since it is inevitable.
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- 305 Extreme griefing is extremely rare and is the stuff of legend, stuff that gets posted on 4chan or SA.
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- 316 Very much dependent on the individual and therefore not something quantifiable.
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- 318 As a note for your survey, it was very difficult for me to rate some of these conditions accurately as to occurrence when they depend entirely on the game. I played EQ1 for about 8 years, and in that game, kill stealing, luring mobs, camping and ninja looting were all seen to extreme levels because the game mechanics allowed it, and I therefore had episodes where such things caused me great frustration. In EQ2, which I played for about six years, you could not kill steal, lure mobs effectively, or ninja loot well, because the game mechanics removed that from the game. Same with SWTOR. I still don't consider camping in and of itself to be griefing. STEALING a camp.....that would have been considered griefing, but in most MMO cultures, simply camping in and of itself is not griefing. It's more like an inalienable right. If you're there first, the camp is yours. If you take the camp away from the camp holders through something like luring, then that would be griefing.
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- 320 As you play and the more you witness/experience griefing, you do get accustomed to it in a way. Spammers simply get blocked via in-game methods, player killing becomes a minor inconvenience, griefing in general doesn't get you "raging" in the chat.
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- 324 I think unless the grieving happens very often, people can shrug it off. Maybe a day or two will be spoiled but then it goes back to normal. So, if grieving incidents happen couple times a month, people would shrug it off and go on. If it happens more often, then it might be a problem. I for one stopped grouping with PvP-flagged people, as you can get PvP-flag on yourself this way due to mechanics of the game and then you can get ganked. Happened several times to me and it was enough to influence my in-game behaviour
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- 333 My experience with this behaviour has mostly been in star wars galaxies (played for 5 years). I think it was far more predominant in player vs. player combat. A lot of it had to do with chat bubbles, which is missing in the old republic game (which I am currently playing). Of course this is the tip of the iceberg as griefing was/is also active with in game mail and the forums.

363 To be honest, I've seen relatively little griefing in the games I lay. Granted, I tend to stick with my guild, so social portion of gaming is mostly with "safe". Most of the griefing I've seen are on games where I'm guildless or the guild itself does not matter as much. Regarding low frequency of witnessing griefing: the MMO I've mostly played is Guild Wars. It's constructed in a way that most of the content is in fact instanced; you won't see other people outside specific outposts unless you team up with them. As I previously stated, I tend to stick with people from my guild, thus having only proper and nice people with me, if any. I've witnessed more griefing (and been a victim of) on more popular MMO World of Warcraft. It's built to be open world, so you'll run into other players all the time. This leads to competing for kills for quests and/or rare loot. Also, the game houses 2 distinct factions that are pitted against each other. While PvP action is disabled for PvE servers, I've noticed people do not really need much motivation to grief opposing side players, as they can hardly communicate at all.

367 The frequency of griefing does not seem as important as the magnitude to which it happens. Players usually ignore small incidents but it can be very disturbing when it gets out of proportions. I've not been grieved that much but I often ends up talking to people who have been, as I like to help new players in game, and it's disturbing to see how far it goes while you're supposed to be having fun on a game that was designed for that purpose. Anyway, there is ALWAYS an impact on one's emotional state or in-game behavior. Some just choose to ignore it while others, like me, need to take a break from the online world to calm down. With experience and as the time goes by, one's threshold of acceptable griefing goes higher but it's usually a rude awakening for new players.

385 Verbal griefing is so common in online games that players generally can place the offender on "ignore" and continue playing. In one game, Fallen Earth, I "played" a female gamer with a handicap, disclosing my "handicap" to another guild member. Within hours I was kicked out of the guild, reason given was because I had a handicap. I have personally witnessed, in Everquest 2, a group mate with a mental handicap, who was playing with his father, subjected to verbal abuse and reduced to tears for being mentally handicap. I am aware of racial profanity directed against gamers while online in games, and sexual orientation griefing is excessively common. Currently, in Pirates of the Burning Sea, there is a French player with a mental handicap that likes to play and trade items with other players, and is continuously subjected to verbal abuse, and who appears to have even been "conned" into using his parent's credit card to pay for a griefer's cash shop purchase (the griefer bragged about it). The more the griefer knows about the individual player, the more the "in game" griefing can be turned to "out of game" griefing. My teenage son was subjected to physical threats of assault within a game in which he was grieved, and an aerial view of our house was posted online in the gaming forums by the griefer with instructions for players to "get him" and commit property damage. There is also an official, company sponsored, video by the EVE developers of an EVE convention in Iceland in which one member of "Goon Squad", as an officially sanctioned speaker, releases information of a victimized player and calls for other players to continuously grief him to see whether the victim will carry through with his statement of committing suicide. As I previously stated, griefers commit their

conduct against the individual player behind the keyboard, and have no qualms of gaining access to personal information so that they can continue their griefing activities outside the game.

- 409 On the other hand when someone grieves you to the point that you feel uncomfortable, it gives you free space to just quit the game and do something useful in the real world (tm). I did.
-
- 421 It's not really something that can be classified into a 'X a Y' time period thing. Often people who are scammed are rarely scammed again as they learn from the experience. Sometimes corpse-camping can be a two-way thing, which can then evolve into actual world PVP where it's not longer griefing and becomes enjoyable.
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- 431 MMOs of any form are communal games. When a player feels the community is against them it can ruin the game experience for that player. Usually people can ignore any form of griefing until they feel it is personal and persistent, at which time it can cause them to quit or change their play habits completely.
-
- 447 I feel that anyone can move areas/chat channels charters and learn to adapt their play style to stay "protected". If someone becomes emotionally affected they should probably do something else
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- 450 "affecting in-game behavior" is a little ambiguous. If I change my chat settings to avoid seeing a spammer, has that affected my in-game behavior? I think semantically it has, but I don't think that's what is being asked.
-
- 469 It's usually low to moderate. But once a month like clockwork I see or experience something on the high end. Also, the more folks you come in contact with, the greater the frequency and the more likely you are to witness something intense.
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- 502 I don't understand the structure of the following question: "At each of the following intensity levels, how much grief play do you think the average player can tolerate before it significantly impacts on their emotional state or in-game behavior?" I have marked it erroneously in order to continue the survey.
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- 510 If the player being grieved continues to feed the griefer, the abuse will continue. It is better to block the player (if able), go to a higher power (such as a game master) and report him, or ignore him after observing that the player in question is a griefer.
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- 529 People should not complain if they roll on a PvP server - this is bound to happen and to expect otherwise considering how trashy society and the internet heroes are is a bit silly. If they can't cope, reroll PvE. The Griefer always get their come-uppance as there are people who get enjoyment out of being police.
-
- 532 Many people within my guilds and clans tend to be very laid back. The majority of us are casuals with the odd hardcore player dotted about. However, we tend to think of mmorpgs and games and games alone. We come here to relax and unwind. If there is someone causing grief, we tend to ignore them and just get on with our gaming experience. If that fails, we warn them and then file a complaint. As I said previously though, we tend to be very laid back about what happens in game and very little affects our emotional state negatively.
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- 553 Depends on the people involved and what happened on a case by case manner so I couldn't say for sure, I just picked the average options because of it.

- 555 I have answered these questions in part 5 as in-game behavior. I would not know what emotional state the person being grieved would feel like emotionally shortly after the grief. Personally I am mad for a few minutes then forget about it, however, others react, or deal with grieving in their own way.
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- 571 Don't think you can state it like this...one time ninja looting if you have been waiting for an item for months... vs. 1 time being corpse camped...
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- 572 Seems game designers have made it relatively easy to avoid griefers. If someone is grieving you, you have tools/options to shut them down. Even "extreme intensity" grieving, whatever that is, will not bother too many players if they can just go do something else and come back later or put the person on ignore. Also, if the rewards system doesn't reward grieving (e.g., if you get nothing for open world player kills) then you don't see a lot of grieving.
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- 612 Its part of the game, enjoy it. It should be fun to be 'griefed'; if it isn't, then play a newer MMO where you can't be 'griefed' like Hello Kitty Island Adventure or Guild Wars.
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- 613 The type of grieving makes a big difference. How personal is it? I was not particularly bothered when players grieved my group by pulling over hostile mobs to try and kill us. This was not an unusual thing, however annoying it was. But when someone sent me /tells of a more dirty/sleazy nature ("hey baby", etc, etc) it really upset me.
-
- 619 It's very hard to quantify what really counts, and how bad it is, sometimes. Though it is a virtual environment, a game, it's not as though it doesn't matter; it's time, money, and effort. I generally ascribe to the "turn about is fair play" idea. So when I get ganked by a group of 4 alliance in WoW, then relog to a high level character and massacre them, is that really grieving or is it justice. It's also a different story if someone does something that nets them SOMETHING. The loot on the mob, the quest item, whatever, vs. someone who goes deliberately out of their way to wreck someone's playing experience for literally no gain. That's simple sadism.
-
- 628 Continuous repeated incidents
-
- 637 I honestly haven't got a clue what is meant by 'intensity' of grieving. Did you mean the level of emotional response by the victim?
-
- 659 Severity of impact in some cases scales directly with the level of effort wasted by the interference. Seeing somebody ninja loot an item with a drop chance below 1 in 10000 that could takes months of repeated farming runs to see can be pretty devastating for example.
-
- 673 Again grieving I witnessed mostly to people not being fast enough usually as tanks or healers.
-
- 676 i think griefers should be reported and disciplined as the game developers feel is appropriate
-
- 679 I think how a player tolerates grieving depends on the mental state of that individual person--you can never really tell. I'm not the most mentally healthy individual, and in extreme cases I've been driven to self-harm by grieving. So it can definitely have a negative impact on people. I think most griefers either don't realize that impact or don't care. When I grief, I definitely avoid the severe forms that have driven me to extremes. I also avoid any mention of gender, race,

religion, or other things that in my eyes could cause significant harm. I think minor, non-personal forms of griefing--like spamming or kill stealing--aren't really harmful to anyone, but once it gets personal and violent it becomes a problem.

680 It depends on what type of MMO it is, themepark or sandbox. Places people can go etc. Who, when and why. But it can take anything from 1 incident, to multiple smaller ones to cause a player to simply quit or move servers... or worse.

682 I'm kind of sensitive regarding issues like this because I suffer from Social Anxiety/Phobia, depression and things like that. I'm writing this because it might affect the way I see the intensity of griefing in any case I might witness or live.

684 I find that most griefers view griefing with a sense of humor unless it somehow puts them at a gameplay disadvantage (e.g., bots, scams, etc.).

708 People are little bitches about it.

722 Griefing almost always happens towards easy targets. Which, unfortunately, are usually new players. This can have a huge impact on the players experience and is likely to completely turn them off from the game. Countless times I've been told about how a new player was griefed, and then decided the game wasn't worth playing. This happens all the time and in such frequency, that games will often be forced to make the new player experience much easier, to counter-act the griefing. As griefing, in most cases, is a supported game mechanic, there is not much else professional game developers can do, as banning or punishing the griefers (unless they are exploiting or causing an unavoidable type of griefing, such as blocking a player in a guarded town building or exploiting in to a locked house) would seem unfair. And, as we all know, the griefers, haters, and trolls always have the loudest voice because they are willing to avoid all reason, self-consciousness, etc... to stir up trouble. While people who actually want to play a game tend to just do that, play the game, and often won't bother much. It is also in my experience that people whom make griefing a constant thing for themselves, are the people who can spend an unhealthy amount of time in the game (which isn't too special... I spend much more time than I should, too), and are willing to spit out near, or over, a hundred dollars a month to support multiple game accounts. There is one guy in the game I play most frequently, which I will not disclose, who has 7 accounts, almost all of which he uses for the specific purpose of being able to grief in nearly every town in the game. Da fuq kind of life does he have if he's able to do that?

726 It depends on how seriously you play a game and how the situation is. If you compete for something then one incident may be enough to impact gameplay when on the other hand you just stand in the main city and get spammed it might not impact you that easily

731 People do it because they're bored and anonymous. Normal person + internet + anonymity = total fucktard (pardon the French)

737 It really has to do with what has happened. If they're tearing into insecurities, all it takes is once.

739 On the ninja-looting griefing, a lot of people ninja-loot specifically rare mounts, something they will most likely never see again.

754 I think it heavily depends on the person. What I selected holds true to the average person. I on the other hand could be continuously griefed in the extreme

form and it would not bother me, but it would severely impact my in-game behavior, as I would just join in on the fun and retaliate in the same way as they have been griefing me. While others would be bothered by it, even at low intensity levels and get upset or even stop playing for a while.

-
- 757 Really just depends on the person and the grief
-
- 764 Internet tough guys are just that :D got to ignore them.
-
- 794 It happens a lot where others can be an audience to it.
-
- 799 This really depends on the person. Personally I shrug off most stuff like this like it's nothing so it doesn't bother me 99% of the time.
-
- 819 This is a comment on the question; it's confusing.
-
- 828 I did some player ganking, mostly because I had been a victim myself or an in game "friend" was the victim. Logged in on a higher lvl character and did the same to him/them. A few kills just like a 'warning'. Nothing too extreme.
-
- 834 I am slightly more sensitive to things and others might have tougher skin then I do. I would have to say that the most frequent griefing problem is verbal harassment. I would have to stop paying attention to city chat and would not ask questions out of fear of being harassed.
-
- 849 Gauging griefing in a manner like this isn't easy. It all really depends on situation and the victim's ability to realize that it is a game and that nothing is truly lost except a bit of virtual value.
-
- 855 I honestly admire your effort. Not THE effort, just your input. Proverbial 'half the people' will not distinguish intensity from frequency correctly, and then there is always the odd man playing lotto with the answers. I'm not sure how you will assess these results and if anybody else bar you has access to the raw data, if the latter is the case ... bring a lot of beer. And candy. Cake's a lie!
-
- 859 I have found the biggest factors to be age and perceived experience of the griever. eg a 15-year-old who has played the game 3 times with once being on the winning team sees himself to be a far more powerful and knowledgeable player than a 35-year-old who has played twice in this game, but has 25 years of strategic game-play under his belt. The perceived entitlement is what makes people so angry/cheated when they are beaten, so they grief that player who beat them.
-
- 868 As much as I'd like, eh?Eh, I'll resist the temptation to drone on beyond this and just say that from the perspective of a relatively experienced player, griefing is a non-issue; a part of every-day life that you just have to, and learn to, deal with, that extremely rarely manifests in bad enough ways that they're a bother. Griefing is inextricably linked to emotional investment - when you invest yourself emotionally in something you care about it, and if you care about something you - just like everywhere else - sometimes do stupid, thoughtless things to achieve your goals. If there was no such emotional investment, then the game would get boring fast. Personally I'm continuously surprised at how well the huge majority of players behave, considering everybody are basically self-policed, with it being very easy to get away with griefing of any kind (other than open violations of rules, and even then only if it's reported and taken seriously by someone with the power to do something about it). The only area where I frequently observe extreme behaviour is verbal abuse, which is (I think) an artifact both of how it's

difficult to communicate one's displeasure to someone without body language and tone of voice - so the rhetoric is tuned up to EXTREME to feel more satisfying - and of how it's equally difficult to gauge the impact your expression of displeasure is having on your target, which again is exasperated by how difficult communication is in this environment. Personal experience has led me to believe that, if I am the target of abuse, responding amicably rather than defensively (and then calmly defending myself after they've calmed down, if I feel the need to do so) dispels at least 9 out of 10 verbal conflicts. Conflicts that are motivated by things other than miscommunication are harder to deal with, though. Some people are just in the mood to be assholes (sometimes *I'm* in the mood to be an asshole...), and there's little to nothing you can do about it other than avoid associating with them. But in my experience, these are very rare. Most conflicts are a result of miscommunication, made much worse by text-only communication. I could probably go on to write 50 times as much as this on the issue if I had the time and patience (and indulgence, eh?) but I'll stop here before I really spin out of control. Hopefully it was somewhat coherent.

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- 873 i cannot really answer the question as i severely lack empathy and the ability to care bordering on apathy.
-
- 884 It really depends on the victim's state of mind and how one tends to react to aggressive behaviour, be it in ignoring the aggressor or retaliating. Some people are able to filter it out better than others.
-
- 897 Often depends on the state of the person anyway, most people will just shrug and log off when they are subjected to extreme grieving, whereas others will scream and cry etc. Very personal.
-
- 907 I can't really speak for other games, but in the game I play, Darkfall, grieving is good sport, people do it very often to each other and people flame each other all the time. That's part of the game and it is fun. The game in its nature is so hardcore that it isn't made for casual gamers anyway, so the few that are affected emotionally by grieving have quit the game a long time ago.
-
- 925 How much a particular type of grieving will affect a player depends very much on the game that is being played. For example, in World of Warcraft, PVP-related grieving (ganking, player killing, and corpse camping specifically targeting inexperienced/undergeared players) is somewhat expected and can be tolerated for many incidents before having any serious negative impact on the player's emotions or in-game behavior. I believe this is because World of Warcraft imposes very little penalty for death, especially a death to another player. In other games, this is different; for example, in the game EVE Online, a player will irretrievably lose his or her ship when killed (ships are extremely expensive and, depending on the type of the ship and what type of equipment/cargo it had, it can be very difficult to replace) and the player may also lose "implants" if his or her escape pod is destroyed (these are also quite expensive and must be replaced quickly since they boost the rate at which the character learns new skills, very important since EVE has a time-based skill-up system). In the game Darkfall, a character leaves everything he or she was carrying at the location of death, including equipped items. For games like these, PVP-related grieving is considered to be much more extreme and it may take as little as one instance to completely change the way in which the player interacts with the game. Other

types of griefing are expected to have varying levels of perceived intensity across other games, as well.

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- 931 most people feed the griefers, which will make them grief more or harder. A lot of victims turn to griefing as well, adding the emotional aspect. In where the original griefer just did it for fun. Personally I can take all the griefing there is. As mentioned before you can /ignore those players, which will make sure that the game won't group you up with them anymore and you can't see their chats etc
-
- 932 When someone 'griefs' very very minorly, most of the time, it is an accident, and the 'griefer' regrets it, but does not have the courage to say "Sorry, didn't mean to do that"
-
- 938 i wouldn't say the magnitude matters as much as the frequency to be honest, a few isolated cases of for instance major homophobic attacks really won't bother a person as much as having a ninja looter in 4 dungeons in a row.
-
- 944 There is so much more to it, what it is about and how much it affects the victim.
-
- 945 The magnitude of Grieving impact is very relative to each player, those who find their self-worth in the game would be more impacted than those who have a strong sense of self developed outside the game.
-
- 951 It's even funnier when they start running like headless chickens, before you even do something.
-
- 981 I was trade ganked and lost the majority of my game wealth, I logged out, uninstalled the game and have never looked back after 2 years playing 50+ hours/week. The most emotional part wasn't losing the valuable items (I could have sold for real US \$), I did have a realization I lost 100's of hours of farming in dangerous places where I died dozens of times and lost small amounts many times over the time it took me to gather the large batch I lost, and if I went through all that brutalization it wasn't guaranteed I would be able to sell the items safely. The person who trade ganked me used alt accounts to befriend me over several hours prior to the trade. But that wasn't the emotional part either, it was the helplessness I felt as the attack happened. It was much like a real life violent violation or robbery. It was over in 5 seconds, the only thing I could have done was not put the items in the trade window, not talked to the guy for hours, but I'd already spent hours trying to sell the items for a decent price. Once I put all the items in the trade window with his alt, the guy came running in on his main character while I had all the items in the trade window. He used a special attack to knock me a couple screens away from the bank so I couldn't put the items into safety, and since I was overweight with all the items from the closed trade window, I couldn't even move so I just sat there getting slashed, trying to fight back only to have it over in a couple seconds.
-
- 982
-
- 983 Really a lot of this I don't find all that griefing when it happens to me. Though I realize others find it to be major griefing. I'm probably not the typical player in that regard and I consider most who do get so upset about it overly sensitive while those who do it overly stupid.
-
- 1009 A lot of it is relative to the person being grieved's mental strength. My answers probably don't reflect that of everyone else's. Personally I don't think there's any sort of griefing that would ever significantly impact on my emotional state.

- 1019 I don't consider a lot of the griefing acts griefing personally, but answered assuming they're griefing for the survey. I think people can handle continuous incidents depending on what's going on in their real life too. Often if you're just in the mood to do one thing, get on, and it's prevented once, you log off pissed. There is way too much hypocrisy and political correctness in modern mmorpgs.
-
- 1034 "At each of the following intensity levels, how much grief play do you think the average player can tolerate before it significantly impacts on their emotional state or in-game behavior?" was a poorly written question to the radio buttons provided.
-
- 1038 It's entirely dependent on the attitude and personality of the person being griefed. Personally even continuous griefing wouldn't bother me particularly as i have a very solitary gameplay style.
-
- 1041 Again, I think that the game is a major factor in what goes on. 'Player Blocking' is an interesting one, because in games like Mortal Online... it's very useful for catching a Thief (such as myself) in the act and preventing them from escaping. I think many instances of the tactical use of such is fine... but it could become frustrating if it's used solely to confine someone's movements when they have agro from a large demon or some such.
-
- 1045 Games like Darkfall, EVE Online, and Shadowbane are/were pretty much designed around the concept of griefing. That makes the above question difficult, as the people I'm used to encountering in online game environments are pretty hardened to that sort of thing, whereas someone from a game like Rift or World of Warcraft might react much more strongly.
-
- 1056 Most griefing I have witnessed is verbal. However, it seems to me that the intensity and frequency of all forms of griefing are related to how the victim responds. In fact simply responding to the griefing is an invitation to continued griefing. I feel I am griefed so little because I do not respond to the griefer in any way. responding to a griefer is much like chumming the water for sharks. The more your respond and chum the water, the more frenzied the griefer sharks become.
-
- 1060 i think some that are harassed or grief will eventually leave server or game, especially when is lower populations, an some or most griefers are using exploits and hack programs, and generally want the need to be the best at any cost and hate losing, so in order to maintain their own stability is to cheat n grief others absorbed in their own guilty pleasures at others expense, givers and takers,..
-
- 1076 My answers regarding magnitude and more specifically frequency are biased by my chosen style of play. As I play mostly solo and generally only group with my own characters (dual-boxing) or with friends exclusively, I can easily avoid sources of grief. Additionally I am what often is referred to as an "alcoholic", meaning I usually make several characters in any one MMO (mostly to try out all factions/races/classes). Whenever I sense I might be, or become, the target of griefing I usually log on to another character and continue play.
-
- 1083 In the case of Extreme intensity just baring witness to it can cause some instability around and by witnesses. Thus I have listed it under none.

1087 Some "extreme" griefing is moderated by game mechanics, or admins. As such it is more bearable and is more of the "high" category even if the griefing is actually "extreme".

1098 This question is not clear because it doesn't explain if the column to the left means the intensity of the emotional state impact or the intensity of every griefing episodes. This is due to the presence of "continuous" in the last option that suggests a long time span for every incident that is also repeated while this is also possible in the other circumstances. At the contrary, if the column expresses the intensity of each episode then the last option "continuous" is redundant with Extreme. In general, there is no point in placing the option None because it is like saying that you can suffer an emotional impact by not being griefed. It makes no sense.

1114 I personally feel that if you set griefers to ignore, and continue on as if they're not bothering you, they get bored very quick. I don't get griefed often because I don't give them the satisfaction most people do by yelling at them to "Quit it! "Griefers live on the reaction, not the actual act.

1120 If you get spammed just /ignore him. Simple.

1126 I think the magnitude will be directly relative to the topic and source of the griefing. Someone talking shit one time about the victim's recently deceased grandmother may be overlooked or dismissed by the victim if the comment is not particularly vulgar or obscene. "She died in bed with me last night." vs. "I was fucking your grandma in the ass all night last night, that's why she died." may very well have completely different impacts on the victim.

1133 Anyone who gets angry and intense over griefing needs to learn that the game is not their life.

1159 The handful of times I was subjected to harassment with visuals, it was extremely degrading. Male characters would use gestures to simulate sexual acts, in effect acting as a form of virtual sexual harassment or visual rape. I was emotionally distraught during each of those incidents, and reported the events to game masters as well as naming and shaming the perpetrators on forums.

F.6 You have indicated that you worry about griefing outside of the game it occurred in. Describe the impact the griefing has placed on your life.

- 3 Over the years I've learned to brush it off, but there are times when I'm confronted with such blatant and undeserved hatred, even if it's not actually aimed at me, that it makes me question the integrity of people around me and the world in general. Nothing sets back a generation of change and acceptance like hearing the words "Faggot" and "Nigger" tossed around casually in a video game, something that's supposed to be a bit of fun.
-
- 11 I quit the games that the griefing has occurred in (namely, Darkfall Online) and play a game where it rarely occurs (World of Warcraft).
-
- 12 I don't get scammed anymore, but in the past, when I was younger (in my early teens, maybe even pre-teens), getting scammed bad made me upset in real life, and sometimes even made me quit the game.
-
- 20 Nothing terribly impactful. You just find yourself wondering what motivated the griefing behavior.
-
- 46 In some cases, I have felt more hopeless about situations in real life after being subject to some forms of griefing. It is very low, but I still end up a little depressed after being subject to griefing.
-
- 51 I started to think more about game and what went wrong and why.
-
- 91 Impact? Well, after certain incidents of verbal harassment I was angry, even after logging out. All other kinds of harassment, while annoying, are just a matter of fact when playing MMORPG's. Either you deal with them, or you shouldn't play any kinds of multiplayer games, including MMORPGs.
-
- 95 After a more serious griefing episode, thoughts will pop into my head throughout the day about what occurred can't say it had a serious effect, but it certainly is noticeable that it bothered me.
-
- 100 My general trust in people has deteriorated over time.
-
- 101 A lot of the more extreme griefing I have been subjected to has ended up seeping beyond the confines of the game, such as over Facebook, MSN and Skype. This in turn has led me to worry on occasion and become more and more reluctant to share real life details about myself beyond the basics such as gender and age.
-
- 109 Yes sometime after being grieved you would be worried and that would disrupt your normal activities, you will think about strategy to counter it and things like this. But those are still just games so the overall impact is still low.
-
- 118 worrying about guild drama, feeling angry about being verbally harassed outside of the game
-
- 120 Why does this anonymous person go on and being a jerk to ppl he or she don't know just because the target don't play/does what he or she would do. Why does ppl act like jerks? How can this make them feel better? Would they act like this IRL, if so wtf has happened to ppl?

- 122 I have enough stress in my RL, if this happens in-game I stress more instead of relaxing to play a game...
-
- 127 Griefing is painful but if you have friends you can always get over it. You just have to avoid people who grief you, or/and stand against them. I have never been grieved strongly irl, but if so, I would stand and search for help and a way to compensate the damage.
-
- 140 Griefing, when intense enough, simply stays on my mind and makes me want to play the game less. It doesn't so much affect my normal activities as stay with me while I perform said activities.
-
- 141 Well, to say it crudely, for instance when you've just logged out after being corpse camped (aka been forced to stop playing the character you want to play for a while), you are pissed.
-
- 142 well it's my choice to play a game or not and when i go online there is so much trolling and griefing you just have to ignore it or don't play at all, if there was harsh rules for insults and racism and griefing in the gaming industry i would actually enjoy playing MMO, apart from that i can go watch a movie or play with my friends on LAN and not have to worry about some punk from the other side of the world harassing me
-
- 154 I have a tendency to get really frustrated when I am forced to quit the game. This can lead to me being less than cordial in dealing with people for a short time after I log off.
-
- 157 After eons of evolution we're still burdened with a (male) youth that's as aggressive as a pit bull on steroids. No wonder that totalitarian regimes still are in place today. I've become more cynical at the least.
-
- 169 On occasion, it has made it more difficult to socialise, because with anonymity it seems that anyone can be as annoying or even cruel as in-game. It has occasionally caused mood drops that greatly affect activities in general in real life.
-
- 172 I will likely be in a bad mood after being grieved for a while, even after having logged off the game.
-
- 174 I have considered and thought about griefing outside of the game to some extent. I will sometimes replay events in my mind to try and work out what happened and why.
-
- 198 No impact on my life. General frustration that people take pleasure from being unpleasant to others.
-
- 205 Not worry so much as reflecting on the incident and wishing I could have done things differently.
-
- 208 it hasn't had any real impact on my life.
-
- 218 Very little. The frustration is something that I would carry with me for days, but not at a level that it would be a disruption to my day-to-day activities. In fact, it tends to manifest more in fantasies of beating the griever to death with his own severed arm, but it wouldn't stop me from paying my bills or going to work. Depending on the severity, the only long-term impact would be that I might quit a game permanently, then quickly replace it with another.
-
- 224 I think about what happened during RL activities which doesn't require too much attention and thinking about what i will do if it happened again (quit game etc.)

- 227 Random thoughts and memories regarding the in-game occurrences every once in a while; 'what ifs' in my mind, as in 'what if I had reported that guy? I should have done that', and such.
-
- 234 I noticed that it bothered me far, far more than it should have, so I took a break from the game for several days to get perspective.
-
- 235 I don't usually pay attention to griefing, but there was an incident with a guildie which caused some worry to me. I felt like I had to be online always at the same time to know what the player was saying and if they were trying to ruin my reputation and spreading rumors.
-
- 237 Something you look forward to becomes less anticipated
-
- 245 Obsessing about the griefing even while not playing causes me problems with anxiety.
-
- 246 I have spent time being frustrated by gankers/corpse camping to the point where it has affected my short term mood. I can't think of any other impact than that.
-
- 253 At one point, I was viciously attacked by a particular player in Guild Wars who continually insulted me despite my attempts to get him suspended or banned for warrantless verbal abuse. At one point, I nearly stopped playing the game because it had such an impact on my emotional well-being. I have played Guild Wars for about 8 years now, and it is a game that I really enjoy playing, so for a while I was very upset that the abusive player had turned one of my favorite activities into an emotional burden. However, I got over it after a few days when I calmed down and the attacks more or less stopped.
-
- 258 Just minor contemplation about events. Usually social interactions with other players and how to avoid future griefing and such.
-
- 263 About the same as if someone yelled random abuse at me while driving or said something sexist while I was passing by -- ultimately, it sucks to be them, and I shake it off, but it's not nice to feel like you live in a world with rather too many jerks in it.
-
- 267 Playing a game is a personal hobby. If I am being grieved in the game I am currently playing and enjoying, then the enjoyment I receive from playing the game decreases. That also results in me playing the game less. This, of course, has an effect on me in real life because I would want to play the game but due to the negative experience and stress I would play less or even stop. I'd also go research other games to play instead or spend time doing other activities whether it be in real life (going out to dinner with friends, housework, reading, etc.) or on internet (shopping, social networking, etc.)
-
- 270 Tend to watch what I say and I think about events like that often now days.
-
- 273 Griefing can bother me for a few days if significant.
-
- 274 Actions of other players tends to anger me outside of the game as there are no results to negative actions, being able to hide behind a screen makes people say and do things they would dare not attempt on the street. This leads to anger more so when an administrative body will do nothing to stop it.
-
- 287 Mostly the impact takes the form of added worries to an already stressed life. I play MMORPGs as an escape from the stress in life and a chance to relax. When I start seeing the same stuff that stresses me out in real life start showing

up in the place I go to escape that makes me worry that I might have to stop something I enjoy and use to 'detox' because it's becoming just the same as what I'm trying to escape from in the first place.

- 290 i find it annoying that the grieving jackass mentality has become accepted in real life, aka it has completely spilled over, and government and banker actions quite prove this (by the way, many of those asshats game, although to remain cool within their sexual or religious community they wouldn't admit it.)
-
- 292 When looking back at a botched evening
-
- 306 Not a huge impact. Sometimes when I think about annoying things grieving memories surface.
-
- 309 It raises my stress level, making it harder to enjoy things and be more capable of any other stress factors that may crop up. It also makes it harder to trust people after a more memorable grieving incident, even though I know the people around me most likely aren't that particular griever.
-
- 322 I'm just a little upset if someone insults me, in a social game or not.
-
- 324 No big impact, but it is quite sad to leave the game because of gank-squad patrolling your quest area, so instead playing the game you wanted to play you now have to find something else to do. Not fatal but still unpleasant.
-
- 325 I've had to change my in-game social circles because of incidents of harassment. This has caused me distress outside of the game since I've been forced to separate myself from social groups that I've been in contact with even outside the game, due to the attacker spreading false claims and rumours about me to people I've played with and raising sentiments against me. All of my grieving-related negative feelings are tied to clashes in interpersonal relationships between fellow players.
-
- 328 Several unpleasant personalities in-game seemed to gossip about me a lot and harass me, due to previous guild-related politics that had set us at odds. They left and formed a new guild, then used me as a scapegoat - they directed their guild to regard me as 'the problem'. I logged several tickets to the game company, and it slowly stopped happening. It affected my life because I had responsibilities to the players in my guild, but was reluctant to login because of this unpleasantness. I guess I started getting a little paranoid.
-
- 334 Decrease concentration in other activities whilst completing activities in school, home, etc.
-
- 348 Well, usually when I remember the accident I start thinking about my own actions and how I could've avoided it, but that's about all. Generally I can hardly tolerate the fact that normal person + anonymity + audience = social retard - which has consequently forced me into playing MMORPGs only with a carefully selected group of people.
-
- 353 It makes me think about what I did to cause the grieving incidents. Sometimes I feel more insecure.
-
- 367 When I'm being grieved, I usually end up logging out of the game to contemplate the society I live in and I'm scared that those people I see in game are actually fellow members of this same society that will vote and have an influence on the world, judging by how they behave in a fictional one.

- 385 Sometimes the verbal harassment bothers me, and stays in my mind for a few hours after it occurs. Corpse Camping, Preying on New Players: I log off and outwait the griefer. Usually only takes about 10-15 minutes, as gankers have low attention spans and will quickly move off to hunt/hurt someone else. Kill stealing/ninja looting, Player Killing, Mob Camping: I just go play (in game) somewhere else and avoid the perpetrator. Exploiting loopholes: doesn't really bother me at all, I play for my enjoyment and don't care what others get as a result of the exploits.
-
- 390 It really sucks to be scammed out of something, that and bug abuse I tend to think about outside of the game. But their impact on my life is negligible.
-
- 394 After seeing what people are willing to do Online, I always worry when I go somewhere new, cause it's only a question of time before their Online Persona will break through their RL persona and become dominant. I've become rather paranoid after I started playing MMO's but it's not just MMO's. It's also RL experiences, but MMO's have definitely helped advance my paranoia. When I go somewhere I always check for the nearest exit, in case I need to get out fast. I also ALWAYS have my hand on my phone, in case I need to call someone. I always imagine, before going places, mostly with people I don't know well, how they could beat me up if they wanted to, or some other worst case scenario.
-
- 423 Increased intolerance to antisocial behaviour from others in real life.
-
- 432 It makes me wary of others and their intentions. I don't know if the next person who speaks to me has a hidden agenda or desires to harm me in some manner, albeit physically, psychologically or financially. There are plenty of people in all societies that would, without hesitation, do any of the aforementioned if they knew they could get away with it. I figure if I avoid talking to people and watch my surroundings, I can avoid getting scammed.
-
- 445 It only bothers me in my real life if it was done too many times by someone I was irl friends with. It can strain relationships for a while, but they usually get patched up again.
-
- 456 Taking up time during the day thinking about a loser who gets kicks out of pissing other people off pissed me off.(That I was even thinking about it irl.)
-
- 475 Thinking about revenge every spare minute.
-
- 476 At times, it has severely affected my ability to find the worthwhile energy to log into the MMO of choice, knowing that people who could only be described as sociopaths are waiting for me while the owners and operators have flatly refused to assist in any countermeasures. This has accounted for a decrease in overall concentration during some work times, and to an overall nervous energy that has negatively impacted my sleep habits. In addition, due to the bulk of my social associations being found in the MMO of choice it has encouraged a very hermetic lifestyle, socializing with only a few local contacts and family members.
-
- 481 Time spent dwelling on the incident. Potential loss of sleep.
-
- 502 It depresses me and that depression affects my general mood in other aspects of my life. While I may not be depressed about the specific instance it reminds me of all the other things that I think are wrong in my life and in the world. Basically it can act as a catalyst, a pebble thrown into a still pond to start ripples.

- 514 I use games as an escape and often when the game feels off or not fun I lose that outlet and feel abit lost
-
- 523 In game griefing tends to make you more cautious of random people's thoughts. Because in the game it's normally random people that grief you. Trying to put a face with the grief at times. And wondering who these people are that find such enjoyment in acting like teenage boys.
-
- 536 Just been wondering outside game hours on how best to react to the situation and deal with the griefing if it occurs again
-
- 550 I engaged the griefer and put him in his place, but it left me angry for about 24 hours. I blocked the person from being able to send me any messages including in warzone matches and I avoid playing with or chatting with the members of the guild he belongs to. If they let someone like him act like that while being a part of the guild they must be okay with that horrible behavior.
-
- 559 It often makes me feel depressed, like I can't seem to do anything right. It makes me think something is wrong with me because I can't stand against the griefer.
-
- 560 Sometimes I think a lot about it after it had happened
-
- 574 Outside of upsetting me I don't allow it to disrupt my real life in any way.
-
- 600 moderate anger and frustration after the incident, after cooling down (an hour or two, I usually just get back to normal)
-
- 601 Whenever I think about playing a video game such as World of Warcraft, after having been grieved, I suddenly feel less inclined to do so. I used to enjoy World of Warcraft for its social aspects, but as I'm sure plenty of other ex-players could tell you, the amount of griefing in that game skyrocketed or I suppose increased exponentially over the years.
-
- 613 The worrying was only with verbal harassment, and mostly happened when I was planning what I was going to do and was remembering it when I was thinking about playing the game.
-
- 614 I did some thinking about what I could have done differently in the situation to lessen/prevent it happening. Some of the time I just needed to get over anger about events that happened.
-
- 653 Attention drain, influenced emotional state, etc. There is no real difference between so called real life and in-game experience. MMOs are played by real people, right? Please note that griefing in different games lead me to different reactions. I quitted playing EVE Online because of being killed but I will not quit a PVP-oriented game like Aion for that.
-
- 666 worry might be the wrong term to use, i think a bit about it as in "that was really annoying" or "what a total twat he was" but it doesn't really change my life in any way, shape or form. It's not like it affects my real life, my desire to play or anything like that.
-
- 671 Made me distracted at work.
-
- 673 Back in wow griefing stopped me from tanking, couldn't be bothered as the report system there sucked and from kicking grief's my kick started a 3 hours.
-
- 676 i avoid social intermingling, mostly; though i would like to be more social, there is a wariness always present that i cannot get past...i do not think poor gaming

experiences alone causes it, but did contribute...i cannot say i have much trust, though, in any 'online' interaction with others

-
- 679 Forms of harassment based on my gender affect me strongly. Sometimes, if people discover that I'm female, they result to insults like "fat whore", "ugly whore", "get back in the kitchen, stupid bitch", rape jokes, women's rights jokes, and sometimes rape threats. These do throw me into states of depression, because it makes me feel helpless against the hatred and sexism that still exists very strongly. In addition, I have an eating disorder. When people call me fat, although it is in a game and they don't know what I look like, it has made me resort to self-harm.
-
- 682 That would take a biography, but I was bullied for a very long time since I was a kid until approximately the end of the high-school. Besides that, I have the problems I wrote about before and I know I can feel things in a "different" way, probably more dramatic than it may be for most people.
-
- 689 I just think about it, wondering if it could have been avoided or if there is some way to avoid it in the future.
-
- 714 While I have never experienced an incident which made me worry about a griever seeking me out in person, experiencing certain forms of grieving, namely verbal harassment, has made me more wary in social environments.
-
- 726 I didn't have as much fun to log into the game. I talk with people who play the same game about the behaviour of those griefers outside of the game.
-
- 737 It's lead me to become more competitive. The gruff I receive tends to be skill mocking, so my competitive, fiery spirit tends to say "Hey, screw off, I'm better", so I spend an hour or two polishing myself and proving I'm better. Can call it a flaw, but that competitiveness landed me a job in Game Design, so... Meh. Give and Take.
-
- 778 No
-
- 788 Not the act itself, but the phenomenon. I wonder about what causes it, and why people feel the need to express themselves so negatively without any real benefit to be had.
-
- 794 It just ticked me off later when I thought about it. But eventually I just forgot and moved on.
-
- 796 Little to none, merely repeats of events in memory, thinking of better ways how the events may have been handled
-
- 804 A couple of instances of sexual harassment made me worry if I was spending my recreational time in a productive, healthy way. Ultimately, I decided that people can be creeps in any environment.
-
- 820 Mildly upset about the grieving that just occurred, but nothing too much. It is just a game and won't affect my real life too much.
-
- 826 sadness or stress when i come to think of it
-
- 844 Perhaps not "worry," but when I am grieved I find myself thinking about the encounter while away from the game, often while driving, and pondering options to report or retaliate.
-
- 845 When I was at work I was thinking about things I'll do in game and I was wondering if I'll be able to do everything I had planned.

- 855 It applies only to lasting relationships. Game is just a medium, as good as any, with its own merits and drawbacks. Ultimately, it's worth remembering that there is a human being behind that PC as well. If we invest time into other people, it's because they are worth our attention and care. Special place in heart, even. I'm not indifferent.
-
- 860 cx
-
- 868 As grieving has a social aspect to it, I devote time to thinking about what led to the grieving and if/how it can be prevented or avoided in the future, or how I could retaliate most effectively within the confines of the game.
-
- 896 Usually just daydream about ways to avoid it later, or get back at the player.
-
- 908 When I'm not preoccupied with real life matters, I can sometimes spend my free time examining and replaying the scenario in my head if the issue becomes very extreme and/or it deals with long-time friends; the issues are more empathetic than personal for the most part. However, my well-being doesn't change as long as I'm cognizant; when the issue occurs while I'm becoming drowsy (usually when I'm staying up much later than usual), I can become a bit emotional, but I don't relay it to others and usually become apathetic to it the following day.
-
- 911 I rethink my strategies while not playing, to avoid or defend better against griefers. It's not really a "worrying", my regular off-play strategizing gets new input to consider.
-
- 932 It's just a thing my mind wanders to while thinking, just thinking about why they did it, and how to deal with it, with low to zero impact on my daily life
-
- 937 Very little, mostly considering to reorganize or change games or play for different amounts of time.
-
- 952 I couldn't help thinking about them when not in the game as well, as they affected other players I cared about/ socialised with.
-
- 967 Verbal harassments - spent time submitting suggestions to the devs (Rift particularly) regarding the lack of effective game mechanics to deal with the extreme griefers who were impacting other players, the server, and causing new players to quit (sales of game).
-
- 987 It is probably silly, but it has made me feel kind of cr*ppy all day, feeling violated in some way, with the feeling that it was unfair, and yet there is/was nothing I could do in defense, except log out, and go cool off. Losing fun and enjoyable time playing the game. And sometimes flowing into the next day. The biggest impact here has been verbal harassment, especially comments meant to demean my person based on my ability to play a specific difficult encounter new to me, rather than focusing on the performance issue. As in, "you're crap, you should stop playing games, get the f*ck out of my group"
-
- 997 Sometimes I find myself thinking of things I should have said or done differently. Other times I think of ways to retaliate once I am playing the game again.
-
- 1001 People have implied if they ever met me, they would see to it that I leave injured. But, there's also parts of town I don't think I would go to alone for the same reason.
-
- 1005 I can wake up thinking to games...on how to get better. I can still remember players in games and their shit talking...even after 5 years. I sometimes felt

useless after being scammed out of my account --- as if losing it all made everything else seem not important. Sometimes being killed repeatedly or not being able to complete one thing will cause me to 'rage log'. Meaning to harshly stop playing.

1011 If someone has recently irritated me, I may get up to grab a drink or walk the dogs or something. I might think of it in passing while I'm doing these activities, as it would be very fresh in my memory, having just occurred.

1019 I've been playing mmorpgs since '97 and when games drastically alter mechanics, or I quit a mmorpg, I often think about what I'll play next....but about Spamming, Player Blocking, preying on newbies, rp disruption, i don't worry. Ninja looting, if i spent hours in-game, I won't worry, but I'll complain to my rl brothers/friends who play with me. Exploitable Loopholes, such as duping and exploiting to gain items, it can affect the game forever in terms of currency or make it more difficult to compete vs. others when gained items have PvP stats. I worry about that highly if I hear it's going on, simply waiting for the companies response and their punishment, which is often too lenient as I think they should be perma bannable offenses. This does weigh in heavily upon my decision upon keeping a subscription. Hypocrisy, i complain to rl friends/bros who i play with about GMs talking to me about profanity when there is a filter and games rated Mature, so i guess moderate. Team disruption, more notably from PvP where teammates go afk or don't carry their weight, i worry if game's worth my time. (I hate instances, PvE and PvP instances) I'm more of a sandbox player, thus Ultima Online was my favorite. When I read forums and hear players asking for changes I don't agree with, I worry highly because I don't want any game I like altered negatively.

1023 Mostly just annoyed with how cheating/exploiting has ruined some games or at least significantly diminished the fun of playing them. I can deal with 'legit' or non-cheating griefing just fine on my own, but if someone is abusing cheats/exploits to grief then there is little I can do other than wait for the game developer to address the players in question or fix the loophole. I categorically refuse to cheat or exploit in a manner than grieves other players, even in an effort to retaliate against other grievers. I will, however, complain vociferously to the game developers about exploiting/cheating, whether through emails to customer support, in-game tickets to customer service "game masters", on the game developer's official forums, or in-game to other players. Generally, I otherwise feel that game developers should stay out of other (non-cheating) disputes between players and allow players to resolve these issues on their own.

1041 In many ways, I think griefing is largely about taking someone unaware. To that end, I think I've seen that there is always potential for something to go wrong -- though, I don't know if I'd call it a 'worry', I would say it puts some perspective on things and does actually help keep me more aware in scenarios where situational awareness can play an important part (such as driving -- gotta watch out for those people who don't watch their blind spots!)

1050 I was camped at a hunting-spot by multiple players. I had to find a way around it.

1064 I spend time while not playing how I can plan my retaliation.

- 1080 sometimes i want to bitch or blog about idiots who make fun of role players in guild wars. their prejudice is really stupid, as they think (or act like they think) people who role play are delusional and think they really are their characters and really are in a different world.
-
- 1084 I spend more time on the forums attempting to get the damage potential of my class to equal the damage potential of other classes. In the game I play each character has roles it is supposed to be able to fulfil. My character class has the roles of DPS, Heals, Tanking. I chose the class for its DPS and TANK roles but yet the DPS aspect of the class is sub-par when compared to other classes with the same role. This disparity causes some players to give me grief over using the character's DPS role rather than its healing role. Therefore I spend a magnitude more of my free time on the game's forums attempting to get developer attention to fix the perceived problem.
-
- 1092 It's more so made me worry about when it will happen again once I re-enter the game and it gives me an indefinite paranoid feeling every time I load up the specific game.
-
- 1093 I would be angry or upset for a little while, and would dwell on it a bit. It would sometimes affect my confidence as a player and my desire to continue playing the game.
-
- 1102 In game scamming made me think about scammers in real life.
-
- 1126 As the levels and frequency of griefing against me and others has increased dramatically and steadily over the past 15 or so years, I have found myself less and less able to enjoy online games by any developer, and immediately assume it's going to be just another game filled with assholes and jackasses that do not care about anyone in the game but themselves. I feel as if my favorite hobby has been taken away from me. I feel as if online games are becoming a complete waste of my money. I feel as if online games are not even remotely entertaining anymore.
-
- 1166 Player's wife found out I was his in game friend and she logged in as him and began to curse, harass and scare me with threats and more.
-
- 1178 I don't think there's ever been a major overlap from those types of things. I remember on occasion talking to other friends who also played about particularly frustrating events we had encountered in the past. Sometimes a little bit of irritation will carry over after a particularly nasty confrontation or something, but for the most part I can't say there's really been anything that's more so then maybe encountering a poor driver on the roadway or something.

F.7 You identified that you have been incorrectly labelled as a griefer. What caused this incorrect labelling? #2. How did that affect you?

- 1 I kill someone on a PvP server and they get upset. **#2.** It didn't really. Some people just don't like PvP. Hell I only like it when there are restrictions in place (like contested zones, or security levels like in EVE Online).
-
- 15 Camping mobs and spawns for gear. PvPing with others who are clearly around to PvP, but just didn't want a fair fight. **#2.** Very little.
-
- 17 Me farming lower level mobs for a rare drop. **#2.** Not one bit, I said a few choice word to the guy and tossed him on ignore.
-
- 22 Griefing griefers, does not mean you're a griefer. **#2.** Occasional, been banned from some mmos for griefing griefers.
-
- 27 Killing other players on a PvP realm. **#2.** I laughed at their emotional imbalance regarding what happens in a dopey MMO.
-
- 29 Enjoyment of the game. **#2.** I was annoyed, the event in question refers to the zombie event in WoW at the end of BC. (The Zombie event at the end of BC)
-
- 34 Incorrectly using the term, and/or exaggerating the situation. **#2.** It caused me to reassess the situation at hand, as well as future griefing (regardless if it was intentional or not).
-
- 38 Trying to help people that get frustrated or just don't understand what you are saying or why you are doing what you are. **#2.** I want to help less people.
-
- 59 My favorite was after undercutting someone on the WOW auction house on several items. **#2.** It amused me to no end, as I routinely posted several hundred auctions daily and had no idea who this person even was.
-
- 60 Misunderstanding of game goal. **#2.** Frustration at short term, than trying to find a way to not be misunderstood
-
- 61 A miscommunication. **#2.** I felt bad that i had grieved someone, even unintentionally
-
- 67 I engaged and defeated a player's character in a PvP zone, while we were evenly matched. He logged onto a character of my faction to insult me as a ganker, then joined some friends and camped my spawn point. **#2.** I was angry. I logged off and just didn't log on for a few days. I wasn't prepared to be camped; I was prepared for fair one-on-one player vs. player combat.
-
- 80 A database wipe made it look like I was griefing a Minecraft town that I was a member of on reconstruction project that required some limited demolition. **#2.** I was rather livid at the time because the ban was from a mod who'd been gone and entire month and missed the changing of leadership of the town a few times over.
-
- 85 People confusing BG strategy with griefing. **#2.** Didn't care.
-
- 93 Well in my past I have "grieved" and so when I'm not grieving, people tend to just automatically label me. It's a mislabel that I understand though. **#2.** It's kind of ridiculous really. Sometimes you just want to share a chat and they are getting pre-emptively upset.

- 99 The average gamer isn't that intelligent and will quickly flag you as a griefer. **#2.**
Not at all
-
- 101 After lashing out in frustration at the lack of consequences or rule enforcement, I was labelled as a griefer the moment I decided I had had enough and retaliated once or twice when pushed a little too far. **#2.** It spawned reluctance to play the game and a longing for the days where community ties were stronger and problems were usually worked out in a mature manner.
-
- 109 kill stealing and ninja looting happen a lot by accident, due to game mechanism, and sometime you see it happening from your side but it is too late. You are a ranged class and kill a mob before a melee class can reach it, you can't help it. **#2.** it's very disturbing especially because as i said i grief only when someone grief me and i try to be very respectful to others, sometime i would even leave an area if i feel I'm griefing someone unwanted, and this happen quiet often in fact
-
- 116 Was labelled as being sarcastic when I was serious. **#2.** Didn't bother me
-
- 118 people associating me with the actions of my friends. **#2.** Helpless, frustrated, angry
-
- 120 someone on my team/guild etc did it and now the ppl think everyone of that team/guild is the same. **#2.** bad, I wanna be a nice guy. So i normally ask what caused this and how I was any part of it.
-
- 127 people who did not understood they were griefers themselves by their actions and attitude. Very frequent behaviour. **#2.** In no way because I don't feel pleased to grief people. So I'm not a griefer. For example I never start to camp or even attack an enemy player in an open area. I do react when attacked, but never start a fight.
-
- 136 Accidental killing mobs **#2.** Not much
-
- 139 'Player Killing (PvP)' is part of the game, and players enter the game knowing this. It's not griefing in my eyes. **#2.** It didn't.
-
- 141 Accidental unintended events, like e.g. pulling a mob not seeing another player was nearby. **#2.** I talked with the other player and explained it was a mistake, and most of the times, it was sorted that way without ill feelings.
-
- 142 Defending a Victim, group targeting me. **#2.** Not much i react if they insult at first, eventually ignore them and if i can be bothered i will report and screenshot it
-
- 146 Was a Bounty Hunter, my mark could not accept the game mechanics. **#2.** Did not affect me.
-
- 147 Incorrect accusations of cheating. **#2.** It is funny when it does not impact gameplay significantly, but annoying when it makes all people leave
-
- 150 Kill steal in team battles, where the kill was accidentally as a support class (in this case by casting a buff on allies that also dealt damage to all nearby enemies). **#2.** no effect, just explained it in chat and it was resolved
-
- 154 Someone thought that I was stealing crafting nodes in Everquest 2. **#2.** I was annoyed.
-
- 157 Player verbally harassed me, I retaliated. Guild mate defended his griefing friend; I got kicked. **#2.** Usually bitterness
-
- 165 Miscommunication **#2.** I further explained my comments, issue was resolved

- 166 Miscommunication when trying to identify player issues **#2**. Saddened as if I was the bully of others
-
- 169 Accidental ninja-looting, mob-killing when someone else had the right, accidentally killing new players. **#2**. It caused annoyance.
-
- 173 winning items in a roll and having people call you a ninja looter **#2**. screenshots for proof of innocence in case anyone believes some random dude spamming on channels. otherwise not, u know there is np.
-
- 180 ON a PvP server, you attack someone of another faction, and that person simply doesn't "want" to be attacked and then reports you as griefing because of it simply because you are preventing them from completing something they were doing. **#2**. just pissed me off a little.
-
- 214 Killing a Griefer that exploited the Player killer flagging mechanism to his favour. **#2**. I was killed lost some equipment and people excused themself to me after i declared the situation i did not get back equipment.
-
- 217 I've accidentally finished off a target of my ally I healed through the whole battle in public battleground. **#2**. In no way.
-
- 219 I killed players lower than myself (they were clan war targets, open season by our rules) **#2**. Didn't bother me a bit
-
- 225 Getting ganked one time is not griefing. This person must have been killed one too many times or they need to not play on a PvP server. **#2**. Not at all
-
- 230 I had accidentally taken something from someone else without knowing. I politely apologized and compensated them. **#2**. Negatively.
-
- 235 Being in the wrong place at the wrong time. **#2**. Got ganked a few times.
-
- 244 Misconception/Stupidity of the accusing party **#2**. Got upset a bit and put accuser in black list
-
- 245 Misunderstandings and cultural differences, often in regards to humour. **#2**. I felt guilty for having upset people, but also upset for having been misrepresented.
-
- 253 I recruit for my guild in Guild Wars on an almost daily basis. I am often labelled a griefer because I post my slogan in general chat once a minute (or less frequently). I am often reported as a spammer, but I am doing nothing wrong according to the EULA. **#2**. No effect.
-
- 261 Griefer trying to grief me by claiming that I'm a griefer. **#2**. Slight annoyance
-
- 265 A dispute over a so-called world boss **#2**. It made me feel angry more than anything else, it felt as though I had just been insulted
-
- 270 Players thought I exploited. **#2**. It felt bad.
-
- 305 Victim being mad and lashing out at anyone in the area **#2**. I laughed and started to indeed grief the victim in most cases.
-
- 308 Accident, or being in a team with someone who griefed **#2**. Annoyed, but not bothered
-
- 318 I've been labelled a griefer when in the process of deterring a griefer from harassing me **#2**. Not at all, because unlike the actual griefer, I always cease and desist my efforts the minute the griefer leaves me alone
-
- 322 Fighting for killing some mob or world boss. **#2**. Didn't affect me.

- 331 I don't view mob camping as a form of griefing. It's fair game. **#2**. I don't care so much.
-
- 334 The blatant use of the term 'griever'. Seems like a word that others throw around with no reason. **#2**. Be unhappy with player, ignore.
-
- 340 skilled player = cheater, or people who kept attacking me and dying and though I was camping them **#2**. Usually I find it funny.
-
- 366 A griever too stupid to grief **#2**. Not, since his claims were ludicrous
-
- 390 I was escorting a low level friend of mine around, killing anything near him. **#2**. Not in the slightest.
-
- 397 When other players get frustrated from being scammed, they're ready to vent their rage on anyone, claiming me to be 'one of them'. **#2**. I was a bit scared for a moment.
-
- 414 In MOBA games; dying few times; labelled as intentional feeder **#2**. got angry; tried to avoid engagements with enemies; not helping allies in risky situations.
-
- 422 I'm not certain. There were a few players that didn't like how I played a PvP map, and they reported me as a leecher (a player who wasn't participating). But I was. =/ **#2**. It was annoying, but I didn't have the problem again.
-
- 431 Misinterpretation of the situation **#2**. It didn't
-
- 432 A lousy, bull-headed player on my team that thinks a suicidal charge equals team contribution. **#2**. Negatively, though I laughed at the accusation and kept playing the way I liked.
-
- 446 I like to pvp. If someone I come across is upset that I kill them they sometimes blow the incident(s) out of proportion **#2**. I don't really mind, sometimes people get upset and that's understandable but it's also part of the game and what makes it fun on a PvP server
-
- 450 Natural competition for resources and display lag **#2**. It made me angry that a person would identify very normal behavior as hostile because they felt they held special privilege to a shared resource.
-
- 462 Mistaken humor or sarcasm **#2**. No effect
-
- 472 Trying to help someone that has been grieved and they don't/can't know the difference between a helping hand and a hurting one **#2**. It made me feel sorry for them and for myself because i might have made someone act that way by my griefing
-
- 473 people thinking camping mob spawns is griefing, or playing within the confines of the game engine isn't fair. **#2**. slightly annoyed at people labelling things incorrectly
-
- 476 After defending a city controlled by my faction using combat tactics suitable for my class, I was informed I was griefing them by ganking them while they engaged NPCs and was informed by the defeated players that I was "a s***headed a*****e" for it. **#2**. It bothered my ego that my actions could be misinterpreted from engaging in a honorable fight for griefing.
-
- 485 Tagging a spawn while someone I hadn't noticed there was waiting for it **#2**. I dealt with it, it is just a game
-
- 506 haughty attitude **#2**. pretty annoyed. I hate people who try to ruin other's fun
-
- 509 PKing **#2**. not much

- 523 Someone exaggerating about the number of times I killed them after they killed lower level players. #2. made me angry he was crying about the same thing he was doing to other people when it happened to him.
-
- 529 The simple fact I was flagged to kill someone of even level? I mean, it's a Player vs. Player server after all. #2. I griefed the person that called me out for no reason :)
-
- 565 Groups of griefers griefing other innocent and weaker players. I stomped them in retaliation and protection of others. #2. Defensive to explain why the actions happened. It cleared my name.
-
- 573 People consider ganking as a griefing activity yet in PvP you do whatever you can to win. #2. In no way.
-
- 574 People like to label others a griefer when it suites their own purpose or needs. #2. It annoyed me, but I know to except that kind of behavior.
-
- 587 Did it unknowingly/by accident- #2. Didn't care.
-
- 600 Accidental attack due to new player being PvP flagged and going past me while I was engaged in a group of mobs. Accidental tagging of mobs, not seeing the other player fighting them or about to fight them (game lag, or environment obstruction, etc) #2. Pissed off that the game allows people to attack other people when you do not intend to - poor design of game. Game mobs should not be competitive but cooperative in nature.
-
- 603 Accident Beyond the incident, minimally. #2. Moved on to something else.
-
- 612 I was so bad at the game everyone thought I was being bad on purpose. #2. I felt like I should learn to play better or play a game that I am good at instead.
-
- 613 this happened only once, it was due to a bug. The mob did not spawn in the correct location for the quest objective and so I did not see it. #2. I felt bad, though wound up putting the person affected on my ignore list after they immediately started swearing at me despite my apology
-
- 614 Mistakenly taken objects in environment that another was fighting toward. Didn't realize it at the time I picked it up. #2. I felt really bad, helped him gain object.
-
- 619 I autoran to a destination while I went to get a Coke. I picked up a mob and it followed me to the destination and the lowbies thought I did it on purpose. #2. I know I didn't do it on purpose, and I killed it when I got back. Then I derided them for their ignorance, inability to see me autorunning into a wall and put it together, and for generally being stupid.
-
- 630 Bad team, everyone pointed fingers at everyone else. #2. No affect.
-
- 631 I was playing extremely well, and was accused of cheating / hacking #2. It did not feel particularly good. I was proud of my performance, but was made to feel ashamed of it
-
- 637 I'm not sure how to put this politely. People are idiots. Definitions of terms such as griefing, trolling, etc, are woefully misunderstood by the often young audience in video games. #2. It didn't affect me at all because I did not care about the person making the claim.
-
- 641 can't remember #2. I felt upset
-
- 648 Stupidity, lacking knowledge of the game on their part #2. Not all that much. People are idiots.

- 649 I attack people when I see them. Most of the time I am simply looking for a strong player to fight against and if I attack a weaker player they sometimes assume that I did this as something personal against them or to try and ruin their experience. **#2.** It doesn't
-
- 659 Described previously. **#2.** They can cry more, they initiated.
-
- 664 Somebody lying in an attempt to cause grieving **#2.** Did not affect me, I ignored it.
-
- 665 I won a roll on a rare mount with 100 and people said I was a griefer. I was kicked from my guild due to it. **#2.** Made me temporarily stop playing the game for around 2 days.
-
- 671 Being near said griefer **#2.** Ignored the circumstances, for the most part.
-
- 673 Kicking people from groups for grieving caused other players to grief me usually if guild mates are grouped together **#2.** Not at all
-
- 677 Accidentally killed a team mate. **#2.** No effect
-
- 689 Usually when imp being brutally honest with someone, they are usually an American who simply doesn't get that in New Zealand we call a spade a spade **#2.** I was a bit annoyed, I don't believe the label was justified and while I don't mind being the 'villain' if I choose to be, I hate to feel that I am one outside certain specific, chosen situations
-
- 690 others grieving **#2.** wanted to explain myself
-
- 696 People making stuff up saying I did things that I did not do. **#2.** I didn't care.
-
- 702 Accidental kill stealing **#2.** None at all.
-
- 703 Fair 1v1s on PvP servers **#2.** Annoyance
-
- 707 Persons who believed I was grieving did not have the full story and could not have realized it was not me grieving. **#2.** It made me somewhat angry, and if more than 1 person labelled me, I would begin to grief
-
- 717 I killed the same character more than once. **#2.** It didn't.
-
- 722 Name confusion **#2.** Not much, it was easily fixed with a bit of discussion.
-
- 725 Using fair game mechanics to win, even though they were at a disadvantage and also by not recognizing their rules and claims on mobs/loot **#2.** If anything, it made ma little proud as it was always done by the type of players, I dislike
-
- 730 To lots of players loot such as gear and mounts is a big deal and I'm always fair and unbiased when I distribute it and it happens I get labelled as a griefer, they tell everybody in trade chat but my reputation is good so it's nothing to worry about. **#2.** Life went on without me grieving and people forgot about it.
-
- 731 Killing people of the opposite faction in PvP **#2.** Didn't give two shits
-
- 739 A difference of opinion on what grieving is. **#2.** Not at all.
-
- 757 I was the only one that understood the mechanic of the fight so when i lived they believed i caused it. I laughed pretty hard
-
- 778 Yes **#2.** I fought my way to a rare mob, and tagged it before noticing that other person was fighting his way to the same mob from other direction. He reached the rare mob right after I killed it, and started verbally harassing me for killing it before he could.
-
- 794 Trying to provide advice/help. **#2.** It pissed me off temporarily.
-
- 814 i was miss understood **#2.** my enjoyment of the game took a hit

- 815 I played a Ranger. **#2**. It didn't.
-
- 816 I wasn't grieving anyone....at the time. **#2**. Didn't care.
-
- 818 Pretense kill stealing **#2**. Not
-
- 826 he/she/they dislike me **#2**. aggrieved, sad
-
- 827 Accidental 'Griefing', like tagging a mob before someone else, without seeing them. This caused people to label me as a griefer multiple times while i had no intentions of doing so. **#2**. I usually just went somewhere else.
-
- 833 Incorrect terms of the word "Griefer" **#2**. Zero impact
-
- 843 mistakes **#2**. didn't change much cause i knew i wasn't trying to
-
- 845 When a guild is in state of war with other guild - killing low lvl players is part of the warfare. But when people don't know about wars they think that you're just another griefer. **#2**. Didn't really care much about it.
-
- 849 Engaging in PvP in a PvP labelled area. If a player does not wish to PvP, do not play in the PvP labelled area. **#2**. Offended me.
-
- 851 Attacking another player while we were on equal footing (equal level, approx. equal gear, etc) **#2**. It didn't, beside providing a few minutes of hate tells that made me laugh.
-
- 855 Poor judgement. Self-interest. Disinterest in any playful, semi-competitive activity. Almost religious crave for routine, 'meta' way of playing the game, imprinted preconceptions. Basically anything forcing a critical reaction to own philosophy or goals. **#2**. Often, amused. In social situations, irritated beyond a doubt. Sometimes just made sad, disinterested and reserved. About to take blows, but not always ready for them.
-
- 858 Happened a couple of times. Most often it's been a misunderstanding. **#2**. Didn't/don't care.
-
- 876 Accidental player blocking **#2**. It made me aware of where I was standing
-
- 879 Was PvPing in a zone with a large level spread as a disease spreading Summoner. Killed a bunch of lower levelled players when an opponent ran away and took the disease into a quest hub. **#2**. Not at all.
-
- 897 Being in the wrong place at the wrong time. **#2**. Not affected, it's a game for Christ's sake.
-
- 907 people not knowing me well enough **#2**. made me laugh
-
- 908 A misunderstanding of game mechanics and/or strategy. **#2**. If widespread (which has happened), it turns from flattery to annoyance/displeasure, and it can even go as extreme as pity and anger if the accusations become threatening to my account's standing (accusations of hacking/exploiting).
-
- 919 New player not understanding the game **#2**. did not
-
- 925 I have accidentally killed mobs other people were waiting for (Kill Stealing) because I didn't know that person was there. **#2**. I am sad when I cause someone else to sustain a loss to his or her time, so I offer to stay around and help them with the mob when it respawns.
-
- 932 Accidently blocking somebody/accidently destroying 1 block **#2**. Not much, I just said sorry, it was an accident, and all was well

- 933 Being labelled as a spammer after trying to get a special non-combat pet in wow. Being labelled as a ninja due to accidental needing instead of greeding, even after apologising and handing the item over to the player who should've won it. **#2.** I felt bad and didn't want to be perceived as a griefer. My feelings about the community certainly dropped
-
- 937 Beating an equally matched player in a 1 on 1 duel repeatedly in quick succession. **#2.** Moderately annoying and inconvenient, younger players tend to make quick judgements and react aggressively.
-
- 938 most of my griefing (team disruption) was more for community moderation, in order to make people leave groups by not healing them and letting them die **#2.** no different, usually was amused.
-
- 964 I only grief in retaliation, so if someone comes across me corpse camping some jackass after I catch him griefing noobs... **#2.** Thought it was funny at the time
-
- 965 Completing a Player vs. Player objective differently than others. **#2.** Not much; I shrugged it off and told them that I had the freedom to play however I wanted.
-
- 966 My abrasive, poorly interpreted personality. **#2.** I had to defend myself against accusers.
-
- 970 I was retaliating against one who tried to grief me **#2.** It did not,
-
- 981 Res killing during a clan vs. clan warfare where you have to maintain control of an area at key points to prevent a resurgence, it can actually be a legitimate tactic as a clan will have to seek neighboring support, which takes time to arrive **#2.** Explained the situation to the individual
-
- 983 Team member in an open PvP zone attacked someone in a duel. I've attacked someone in a duel without knowing the unwritten rule of duels in open PvP zone shouldn't be interrupted even though there were places one could go for duels without being interrupted **#2.** I laughed. They shouldn't have been duelling in an open PvP zone.
-
- 1001 Perception **#2.** It didn't. People are wrong a million times a day. Can't let every person who thinks $2 + 2 = 5$ affect you.
-
- 1009 My guild tag, I get associated with other people in my guild being jerks, so that makes me a jerk. **#2.** It didn't.
-
- 1019 They consider things I don't consider griefing, griefing. Also sometimes getting revenge, they apparently forgot what they did. **#2.** Not much aside from explaining to them it's not griefing or why I did it.
-
- 1023 Unintentional kill stealing, unintentional training, false accusations of cheating/exploiting **#2.** Usually just a minor annoyance, sometimes worked out socially
-
- 1031 Misunderstanding **#2.** no impact, i explained myself and fixed the situation if they deserved.
-
- 1034 Bad place to be at the wrong time **#2.** I didn't care, told them to look at combat logs and other logging methods.
-
- 1041 Most recently, I was making stuff for my team in Rift's Conquest system. Apparently, +% healing buffs are not very popular and people thought my crafting of them (instead of a recipe I didn't have) was in effort to troll the team (i.e. Team

- Disruption) **#2**. My desire to work with that team certainly went down the drain! But I was just there for a title anyway.
-
- 1042 "Kill-Stealing" from someone who went afk for a few minutes, And I came into the map when he was afk **#2**. Barely affected me.
-
- 1057 Sweeping generalizations based off affiliations with others/guilds **#2**. Not at all, it has no bearing on how I enjoy the game I pay to play.
-
- 1062 Defending a person **#2**. I didn't care
-
- 1064 Targets don't understand the rules of the game. **#2**. It doesn't, I usually follow the rules.
-
- 1069 i was once mistaken for a ninja looter which resulted in me being verbally harassed. **#2**. I felt my ingame reputation had been negatively affected.
-
- 1082 Misunderstanding of verbal communication or previous context **#2**. Required me to clear up the miscommunication
-
- 1087 Not exactly "griever" but: a few thought I used hacks when that wasn't the case. Also some thought I was going after them, when I was only protecting our team. **#2**. The issue with people who thought I was targeting them on purpose made me sometimes uneasy and I felt like I had to clarify it with words.
-
- 1098 mistaken person **#2**. anger
-
- 1102 A misunderstanding about the loot rules. **#2**. Made me sad for a short time.
-
- 1107 griefers attempting to get good players in a team / group banned **#2**. no effect, it wasn't taken seriously
-
- 1133 Name confusion, incorrect assumptions, grudges. **#2**. At most, they kicked me out of the part.
-
- 1134 Random chat spam **#2**. None at all
-
- 1149 Some players will claim that skilled players are cheating **#2**. I thought it was obnoxious and absurd
-
- 1153 Being well known around the game. **#2**. I wasn't affected, I simply denied the accusation.
-
- 1181 Dry sense of humour **#2**. I was quite taken aback, it was not my intention at the time
-
- 1182 Being in the wrong place at the wrong time, having a similar name, or being associated with a griever **#2**. It never affected me beyond costing me a few minutes here or there.
-
- 1183 Winning in a fight, the loser often sends verbal insults. Griever is one of them. **#2**. I really did not care.
-
- 1185 Too much constructive criticism. **#2**. I pretty much stopped talking/typing.

F.8 Do you have anything else to add regarding the impact that griefing causes?

- 3 Yes, I think griefers severely underestimate their impact on the psyche of their victims. Just as they seek a place to blow off steam, some of those people they're griefing are people with troubles of their own that just want an hour or two to forget about the world crumbling around them, just a bit of time to relax and ignore all of real life's woes, only to have that taken away as well. You'd be a fool to say that has no psychological effects on a person; it's completely understandable, and human, that when shouldering everyday life's burdens while also being denied any temporary means of relaxation or escape, you're quicker to lose your temper with those around you and function much worse socially.
-
- 6 I thought your options for the question before this one all sucked. There should be something like "Raged at the game developer for allowing the griefing" or something.
-
- 13 The way it occurs matter. Being killed once is annoying, being killed while fighting an NPC is really annoying, being corpse camped can really p*ss you off...then it matters if you are being ganked every day, if you are getting camped every day and so on. I believe most people would quit a game where they were constantly being camped by higher level players for example.
-
- 15 I think it affects people more than most realize. Unlike other types of gaming, people put tons of love and time and care into their character and their reputation in mmorpgs. For many people, it's a vessel to live an alter-ego or a second life. When they feel that things are going bad in their virtual life, it may come out in their real lives. I try to be more careful with the way I treat other players these days.
-
- 22 Griefing is part of mmos and developers need to add more tools for the players to utilize, such as in UO bounty systems, yes they can be abused, but they also can solve problems if implemented correctly. Instead most mmos pretend griefing doesn't exist and make carebear games and ban players for no reasons, that create griefers who grief to get players banned but not banned themselves. Let the players solve their own problems within the game.
-
- 26 Personally, griefing doesn't much impact me anymore. It would have at one point in my life, but after years of playing MMORPGs and cooperative games in general, you learn to give griefers a proverbial pat on the head and a "that's nice" and move on with your life.
-
- 29 I think a lot of gamers clearly need to learn to be more adaptive in their ability to respond to changing stimuli.
-
- 46 Griefing I feel can make a person feel depressed, and a lot of the time be discouraged from things they enjoy doing, just to avoid being emotionally harmed or reminded of when they were emotionally harmed.
-
- 48 I think on some subconscious level, griefing and the acceptance of it have eroded not only online communication, but societal real-life communication as well. People are less likely to consider a well-reasoned but opposed argument, for

instance, after repeated sessions of 'ignoring the griefers', as if ignoring the argument is a preferred solution. I think we have only begun to see the true damage that the acceptance of what is often called 'troll culture' or 'trolling' has caused, and we will be seeing it for years to come. This goes even more so for people who perform in-game actions beyond 'just trolling'; those who intentionally try to disrupt another's play session have dissociated the reality of another human being from the ethical consideration or have taken it into consideration and found that it wasn't a factor that merited temperance.

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- 56 Generally adds to a negative experience. Most people who are grieved severely do show signs of losing their temper.
-
- 62 Griefing is because of being anonymous online, people that grief are all because they don't get that feeling of power in real life and they have to go online to be anonymous to get that by ruining others game experiences
-
- 72 Once again I strongly disagree that kill stealing is griefing, When i do gank a lower player it is just the once and i never camp
-
- 80 Might be the wrong place, but I just want to clear up something. When I felt liberated after being grieved and then less free after it was because being grieved like I was lifted my self-imposed restrictions for me to retaliate (in rather spectacular fashion) and then after those restrictions were reinstated.
-
- 93 I feel the results are very minimal. anyone who claims else wise is a complete tosser.
-
- 100 It leads me to uncomfortable questions if a lot of people are like this in real life situations, lacking any empathy and being only interested in their own personal emotional gain.
-
- 101 It is very much a major issue that can turn even the healthiest of communities into a spiteful cesspit. Grudges often remain, new players end up getting dragged into arguments that do not really concern them and most 'nice' players end up closing themselves off from the rest of the community, usually doing their own thing in exclusive cliques.
-
- 109 They are 3 types of griefing for me. -The grief coming from pro gold farmers, which have a huge indirect impact on you through the economy and chat spam, they use and develop hack and bots. But those guys are usually quiet respectful if you happen to know them in game, strangely they are very respectful and polite people, sometime they will defend their income though if they need to and use all they can to do so, but it is very rare. -The second level are big guilds that will use anything to "win" and will use the same grief method pro gold farmers, those are the worst and have the most impact, because not only they have an indirect impact on you game with the use of exploits, hacks, bots and all this, but they will also go for direct confrontation, if they see you on "their" mob camping zone they will grief you so you won't come back take "their" spot. -Then you have the lone griefers, some do it on purpose because they like disturbing you, or they do it because the game is not very well designed and push people into confronting situation, like attacking someone with very low health, which obviously most mmo push you to do because they don't promote "fair gameplay". There is a huge distinction here between those people and somehow i think you didn't make a distinction in your survey. There is also the grief because a lot of game in fact

promote this kind of behavior, is it in a wanted manner or not from the developer, sometime it's quiet hard to say. For example a lot of developer will use "exploiters" to test their game at beta stage, which will give them an edge during the whole game life span. Some games like GW2 try to combat this kind of behavior from a development point of view, but most don't really do any work about this, GW2 did it because they want to promote cooperative gameplay rather than competitive game play.

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- 127 People react differently to what appears to them to be griefing. But structures too! Griefers can have an impact on the games itself. A lot of servers on WoW are considered as "noob" "low" "noob PvE" "low PvP" "fake elitists" "cheaters" etc. And gamers ask "where should I play?" constantly. When gaming online you are researching a place to be. That's the server concept: the small village, the community, formed with guilds, factions, etc. When you buy a house, you do prefer be in a charming neighborhood than surrounded by mad people, criminals, or uneducated people. Same there. If you take for example the Player Killers guilds which killed the MMO Age Of Conan, they were groups of griefers blocking every possible gaming experience for new players on servers (which were almost empty at this time) This is an extreme behavior because:- the game was in danger to die due to the lack of people playing it- these new people were easy preys- the griefers didn't gave a shit about the game So it was almost a criminal case from the point of view of Funcom (the game company) AOC becoming free to play helped to dilute this fact by giving more and more players to the player base, which became less attracted to the game before it became free to play and then permitted to slide the grief level to a simple "high PvP level"... It was a failure in design from the beginning, but players-griefers didn't helped either! On some wow PvP realms griefing is very high. There are cases of Denial of Access by hacking. High ranked PvP gamers who can't connect to the game because someone hacked their connection to get them away from the game. That's just criminal. Same goes with life threats on wow forums. Some people are making money by rushing PvP to other players, which is called "power levelling" and threaten people who want to reveal their identities. This is a criminal case. Blizzard don't act very fast about it. Threads are deleted, but not characters. Griefing is not only virtual, it can be real, but worst, it can be real DUE TO VIRTUAL ELEMENTS. Griefing on this extend cannot be called griefing. And that's the true problem some people does have today. In your survey, you talked about griefing, but your vision of griefing goes from basic trolling to extended real life griefing. that's not the same, definitely. In the end, as always, it is a matter of population. Give tools to good people, they will build a house. Give tools to bad people, they will destroy a house. The fact that frustration grows in society, due to a lack of morals and medicatic exposure of stupidity, won't help the MMO genre to keep cool and avoid the phenomenon of griefing. Initially MMO's were a paradise for nerds, geeks, who were outcasts in the early 80's 90's. Saying you were playing video games before the advent of consoles was considered a madness. People who did play rpg's at this time were highly implicated in their hobby. For those who does remember the beginning of RP realms on wow, it was marvellous, really. 7 years later it is AWFUL. Due to a mediocre community which discouraged the good RPer's, and let the realms becoming shit holes. No other

word. Same goes for PvP. Today's PvP is:- hacking- faking PvP ranks by cheating the ranking system to lure the servers into thinking you're a good player (especially in arenas where cheaters are trading victories)- griefing on forums and IRL- power levelling for REAL money For the new promising player who gets in, it is discouraging. This new player will cease to play and the game will eventually lose subscribers due to events like this. And even PVE is targeted. Today's big guilds do have sponsors. These sponsors want results. If they can't provide these results, they will lose money. It can go even further! A site like Machinima.com which does partnerships with youtube streamers while sucking out a lot of money from the streamer in exchange of giving him access to a larger viewer base, ARE doing griefing in some sort of extent. Players ceased to stream because they lost their rights on what they were streaming due to the contract this company made them sign.***SO in the end. And because nothing can be perfect. On the subject of griefing in MMO's, people have to understand one thing: it will always exist. Part because it is human nature. Part because all the tools are present for it to happen. Part because like every social group, it is alive and evolving. The best ways for a company to avoid griefing would be to:- not implement elements of gameplay favoring bad behaviour- keep a vigilant eye on the activities occurring inside and outside the game- giving to the worthy and trusty player base a lot more power to regulate what happens inside the game Which would be basically turning a game into some sort of complex and official social structure. At the risk of sucking the fun out of it. But this is sadly one of the only viable options for those who want to provide a SAFE gaming environment for everyone, due to the current state of the internet. Hope my bad english wasn't a problem for you to understand.

142 Piracy became an issue with DVD, Music and it is becoming a common thing for a lot of people, it appears game Trolling and Griefing which has been in gaming for a while now will be around for as long as Piracy and other major internet issues

145 I think it can have a very negative impact on the player population when it involved player killing. Look at Mortal Online, open world PvP with full loot rights, the perfect environment for griefers to play their trade and it has real population problems. People try the game and quit very quickly due to the rampant ganking. Here is a game with a very low population and yet the players keep trying to attract new blood, only to scare them off by ganking them. They complain constantly of gaming site forums about lack of players, and yet they are the ones causing new players to quit. If this doesn't demonstrate the level of idiocy involved nothing else will. MMORPG's are social games. Griefing is anti-social behaviour. Of course it will affect players badly.

151 It really depends on the person, more experienced players tend to view it as something that goes with the territory if you choose (for example) to play on a PvP server. Griefing incidents can be immensely irritating at the time, and sure, I've logged out in frustration occasionally in the past - but they don't tend to affect my enjoyment of a game (I'll log out and play on another character for a while and avoid the area), and they certainly don't affect anything outside the game. I consider myself lucky that I've never had to deal with out of game harassment like some things I've read about - but then again, I have the sense not to prattle on about my gender, orientation, or give out info about where I live, so there is

nothing personal anyone can hit me with. I also make it a point not to call out players in global chat or anything that can call down griefing upon someone. The only behaviour I can "control" in a game environment is my own, once I accepted that, everything else just became exponentially easier to deal with.

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- 157 It wears people down to the point where social interaction is reduced to a minimum. LFG tools aren't the cause of the lack of social interaction, they merely facilitate a worn down community. The amount of trolls, spam and trash talking teens have made MMORPGs less attractive.
-
- 164 I'm very thick skinned and have been subject to griefing aimed at me personally very infrequently. I generally just shrug off such silly behaviour - obviously the acts of an immature individual without a clear understanding that actions ---> consequences. I think BECAUSE I'm thick skinned and don't tend to react to volatile situations, or laugh them off, I don't tend to get targeted. For someone younger or more sensitive though, or someone that does most of their socializing online, I would think such incidents are a great deal more upsetting.
-
- 167 Any griefing in-game has no impact on my real life whatsoever lol, what happened in virtual worlds stays there, at least for me.
-
- 173 imo ganking and corpse camping aren't griefing, they are PvP, if you are outplayed by someone u have to get reinforcements or wait for the odds to turn into your favor.
-
- 174 These are games and any negative impact on people's lives as a result of griefing is a bad thing. A lot of people take things far too seriously and do not take account of other people's feelings.
-
- 180 Sometimes, reporting someone for griefing just because you're mad about being killed is in and of itself another form of griefing in retaliation in some games.
-
- 198 Again, depends a lot on context - joke griefing with your friends has little or no impact. For me, I get really frustrated in the short term when I am verbally abused, but then just let it go, therefore it doesn't really affect my feelings or behaviour. I end up pitying the griefer more than letting it affect me. FYI - Contradictory to your text, I couldn't only select one of the responses to my griefing, I was forced to select three, or else it wouldn't let me move on.
-
- 203 I been grieved before, I retaliate against griefers, however one knows who they are and avoids the situation to begin with.
-
- 214 Griefing imho has the most negative influence on players that be of young age and/or new to the genre and destroys the fun they feel playing mmos and eventually also has a negative impact on their self-confidence and general mood. It probably drives significant amounts of potential players away from mmos and forces developers to implement tight controlled gameplay systems that prevent griefing but also prevent creativity. Griefer or Player killer can add to the adventures if developers be able to control the frequency and emergence of griefers in PvP zones for example - in a game with divided PVE/PVP-Zones like Daoc griefing in form of player killing, noob killing is much less a hassle and adds to the adrenaline rush when entering "dangerous" zones where this sort of griefing is enabled. Some sort of griefing is only to counter with chat restriction and ignore functions. Griefers will exist anytime and the best is to lure them into zones and griefing acts that enhance the game for all players while offering

security against them elsewhere so it's the non griefing players' decision to take the risk and go to places known for griefing.

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- 215 I consider griefing a waste of my playtime. Once I feel that the game supports instead of limit griefing I simply leave or avoid the game altogether. Plenty of grief-free alternatives around :-)
-
- 219 I know people who have quit playing MMORPG's, sometimes for as little as a single griefing incident. Years ago I tried to introduce a friend to Lineage 1, and someone griefed him by attacking his dog (an action the game permitted, where as players were actually immune in town) He got so pissed he never logged in nor played an online game again.
-
- 224 I am pretty sure there are people who are not griefing themselves but take griefing as a part of the game which IS SUPPOSED to be there. I am just not one of them.
-
- 225 Griefing can be nasty, it's important to keep your head cool and go into the game knowing there may be griefing. It's also important to know what to expect: chances are if you play on a PvP server, you will either get ganked by a higher level, same level while you are low on health, or you will at least have to fight for your well-being. It's the name of the game. There is no sense in playing on a PvP server if the danger and combat are not your cup of tea.
-
- 234 I would like to add that I only play Dungeons and Dragons Online, and many of the situations labelled here as griefing (such as Mob Camping, Kill Stealing, and Player Blocking) do not exist or have no real bearing on game play.
-
- 248 Your survey is a bit broken/misleading. On the previous "rank 3" screens, the survey would not allow you to continue without filling out ranks 1, 2, and 3 completely. Though, the instructions asked you to leave it empty if you did not agree with the options, or only list 1 or 2 if you only agreed with 1 or 2 of them. Had I been able to, I would have left the last two "rank 3" screens blank.
-
- 263 I think griefing, and the way it's reported in the gaming media, adds to the public perception that gamers are powerless, immature social misfits who turn to gaming because they can't succeed anywhere real. The behaviour itself is usually a combination of cluelessness and bullying, spurred on by the perceived anonymity of being online. I'd make a distinction between gold-spamming messages (which targets everyone and no-one in particular) and the sorts of behaviours that target an individual, though. Gold-spammers are annoying and their intent is malign, but their actions can result in you being hurt in real life - having your CC information stolen, for example. Griefers can do serious psychological damage (it's a form of cyber-bullying) but they can't empty your bank account. Motivations and results are also very different.
-
- 271 I'm afraid I'm pretty good at being where griefers aren't so, despite my many years in MMOs, I just haven't seen that much of it.
-
- 272 urmom likes me as much as I like her.
-
- 287 All in all, griefing really just adds a lot of stress to what is supposed to be a fun experience. While different people take things to heart differently, griefers often completely ignore this until called on it and then and only then do they use it in an attempt to say that they are the ones who are being victimized instead of the other way around. Since griefing is such a touchy subject and so open to

interpretation, it's easy to use the drama it stirs up to cloud the real impact of what is going on. I used the term 'good griefers' earlier--and it's sad that there are people who pride themselves on being good at such a thing--but it is important to note that a 'good' griever will cause more impact and damage than someone who is just 'dabbling' will because they know just how to work a person's reactions to bring about the biggest impact they can and it's these people who can and do (and in far too many cases) drive people away from a game they enjoy and have invested a lot into just because the griever wanted to have a little 'fun.' The griever will most likely not think of what they did again after a short while (and of course will never feel bad about it) while the other person has just lost a stress release, social opportunity etc. and may feel horrid about it for a long time afterward. (I know people who feel worse because they KNOW they shouldn't let get griever get to them, but the experiences in their life, stress levels etc make it so they can't help but get upset.)

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- 304 For most people, grieving doesn't affect their gameplay. At worst, most of the time people just worry about whether it gives them unfair advantages. I think an extremely small minority DOES get offended by grieving, in which case it is probably very troubling.
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- 305 Grieving someone that you think deserves it for whatever reason makes one want to grief harder. Notable cases are when they accuse you of something you didn't do.
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- 316 Many are learning to accept it as commonplace in MMORPGs. This is a fallacy and should not be allowed to propagate.
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- 318 You include verbal harassment under grieving for the purposes of this survey, but I'll define that very narrowly as things like taunting remarks, or casual harassment, in which the person making the remarks doesn't usually personally know the person he or she is harassing. Verbal harassment itself covers such a wide variety of other issues, like sexual harassment, and can encompass ingame email. I've encountered some VERY serious situations over my years of gaming with forms of verbal harassment, but they were usually very, very personal at that level, and at that point required the intervention of guild leaders/game masters/customer service for the game. Ingame taunting or trash talk can't be put in quite the same category to me. The impact of the grieving kind is usually nothing more than frustration and these days with the ability to ignore people in chat channels and ingame mail (even game forum posts), it's a lot more difficult to actually continuously verbally harass someone. When someone goes to the point of making new characters to continue verbal harassment, etc, then customer service will step in. As for the impact of other forms of harassment, you have to look at the environment. On a PVE server, you have some recourse for most forms of harassment, many are outright impossible, and the rules are much stricter. On a PVP server, you acknowledge that you're willing to put up with a lot of things that would be considered grieving in another context. Literally. In SWTOR, they warn you when you select the server. That leads to perhaps greater frustration when grieving does occur because you KNOW that nothing, absolutely nothing at all, will be done about it. It's not against the rules, in fact. Going from PVE to PVP after so long, I have to say I've experienced few incidents of actual grieving on my PVP server. But the ones I have experienced

are very memorable in comparison to the more common, and therefore more mundane, problems I encountered frequently when playing EQ1. It kind of speaks to that old saying, when it is good it, is very good on my server, but when it is bad it is truly awful. Most people play by an unwritten code, in which you are free to kill a person of opposite faction when you see them out and about in the world questing. But you rarely kill them repeatedly. Because you don't want this to occur to you as you are questing. You don't corpse camp for the same reason, though it is possible to spawn your corpse where it can't be camped (this loses you time getting back to the location you died at). In essence, we play by "do unto others as you would have done unto you." I understand this is NOT the case for most PVP games or servers, and I'm not sure why my server environment is outside the norm. The structure of the game itself might be encouraging this behavior as it sometimes resembles a single player game more than an MMO. At any rate, griefers are therefore rare, but make a big impact when I encounter them. A few deaths and I'm ready to rip my hair out. After the incident in which I spent several hours trying to reach the live event vendor before the event ended, I posted rants on the SWTOR forums. Normally, I'm pretty even-tempered, and each incident doesn't impact my overall game experience. But at the time.....my experience is HUGELY impacted, and if it occurred more frequently, I would be switching to a PVE server post-haste. Most times it's akin to someone cutting me off in bad traffic. You get over it pretty quickly after the adrenaline wears off and you've muttered to yourself for ten minutes. But if it happened every day, all the time, I would find a different route to work, or in this case, a non-PVP server. And usually, if I'm being seriously grieved, I will either switch to another character or ask a friend to come help me prevent the grieving. I don't, by the way, consider grieving deterrence to be grieving. If you have to kill the person ganking you while you're questing three or four times with a friend to make the point you're not an easy target, it isn't grieving. Continuing to kill them after they've demonstrated they'll leave you alone in order to gain some kind of revenge would be grieving. My friends and I make a point not to retaliate in this way because we don't want to, and this sounds trite, become like the people we dislike. But we also refuse to be victims of them if we can band together to drive them away. Though it would, sometimes, be very, very satisfying to grief the griefers, it's both against my code of ethics and it's unwise. Because it is not hard to end up on a list of people that someone's guildies will then grief in revenge, and like vendettas, you begin accruing enemies. Of course, on a PVP server, some people LIKE this dynamic. That's the dichotomy of the PVP server.....grieving to one is just some kind of realistic gameplay to another (wouldn't YOU kill your hated enemies on sight?). It's sometimes hard to argue against that rationale.

324 As I said before, some people do leave the game to avoid grieving for the day it happened. Or maybe not the game but questing area in which they were grieved, thus reducing amount of available players to group with. But then, it can lead to forming anti-ganker squads which is additional in-game activity, but i personally do not take part in it. Though I always cheer for people who do take their time to punish gankers.

331 Don't take bad stuff that happens in an online game too seriously.

- 333 It creates unnecessary drama, with people who (in my opinion) don't have a whole lot going on in their own real life. Thus 'harassing' others becomes somewhat of a focus for them. Age is no barrier either to the level of griefing by some (ie it isn't necessarily restricted to immature teenagers). Also things for some are very serious but they forget it is just a computer game to be enjoyed otherwise why play?
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- 363 My personal calmness might give me a biased opinion on the subject, but I don't usually find griefing to be that bad. Granted, I've not seen all kinds of griefing/all that much of it. I've only ever been once angry at getting grieved; that was when a specific monster had been killed in front of me, and I've had to wait few minutes for it to respawn.
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- 367 The impact that griefing causes online is the EXACT SAME ONE that it causes in real life. No distinction should be made as the results are the same. Worse, you actually don't get to know the person who attacked you or see her again online so that you could diffuse the situation or just realize that it's not worth worrying about it. This leaves a sense of unfinished business and conflicts that were never solved (and I firmly believe that solving an issue is the only way one can actually get over it).
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- 383 griefing often causes people to stop playing, because after all a game is meant to be fun and entertaining, griefers take the fun out of the people who are not prepared nor willing to get into this (mostly PvE players in open world PvP games)
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- 390 I learned a long time ago that you need a thick skin to survive, unfortunately most new gamers today get far more affected by griefers, perhaps even more then the griefer intended. It probably drives many new people away from gaming.
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- 397 Being severely grieved certainly results in an empty feeling.
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- 432 Mood. Misery tends to like company, and what better way to spread the unwealth than to spew it in all directions? Someone has a bad day and wants to vent while remaining anonymous; no one knows your name, and if you're persistent enough, you can really impact someone's playing experience.
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- 445 I *only* grief griefers and bots (which are technically griefers, but anyway,) and only in games where the support team doesn't do anything about the griefing. In those cases, retaliatory griefing is about the only way to get control back when you've been grieved. It's much better when support handles it, though. Then I can just report someone and see them get suspended without it having any long-term effects on my game time. If they come back to harass me again, I report them again, they get suspended again, and may end up eventually getting banned. The griefer's removed from the game, and everyone can go on playing peacefully. Most MMO support teams, though, don't bother to do anything about it. If it goes on too long, retaliatory griefing stops feeling effective, and I just stop playing that game.
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- 450 I think the prevalence of griefing and the ability of players to avoid or respond appropriately to griefing are enormous factors in shaping the social structure of that game. Ironically the tools players are given to block griefing, are often used by griefers to falsely accuse victimized players, so implementation must be

handled very carefully. Also games that include PvP and a natural ability to grief will often attract an outlaw class that thrives in such environments.

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- 463 People grief because they know that their actions will have no real consequences beyond a temporary or permanent ban. I have never personally been subjected to severe griefing beyond anonymous ramblings which are largely irrelevant.
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- 467 Opportunity + anonymity + (audience OR low self-esteem OR feelings of powerlessness) + lack of empathy = griefing The aggregate of griefing behavior has decreased my personal enjoyment of games to where I played much less and mostly stopped interacting socially with people I didn't know. In cases of other people I know, they've stopped playing altogether over griefing. Even when the impact of griefing is relatively low, if the behavior should be relatively easy to prevent such as from spamming gold-selling websites in chat channels, the impotence or unwillingness of the company to stop it makes me less likely to purchase a future game from that company.
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- 468 Griefing in some manner is something I have grown to expect. I've been playing online games in some manner from MUDs to modern day. There are certain methods for dealing with griefing, but I've never found myself to engage in griefing to the same degree I have seen others. I see it as a lack of empathy that causes people to actively grief. As I have aged I've noticed myself being more empathetic to users as I have been in their shoes at one time or another. Experience and age is not always a temper to the fires of anonymous rage. I find competitive gaming to be more compelling and provides a greater overall sense of achievement. In an organized PVP setting I get more of what I want -- using my own skills and abilities as a player to overcome and "win." There is nothing that beats the feeling of winning a fair competition.
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- 472 I don't care much about griefing in game because as long as it's allowed, everyone myself included will continue to do so. The other types of griefing spamming/scamming/exploiting is VERY frustrating because it's against the rules. I play mostly PvP Because i like feeling powerful by killing other players in the game. i do not consider camping/ganking to be a major type of griefing.
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- 476 Most players who have been grieved will ignore it, while some members are so distraught on the actions, depending on the severity of the grief (exploited loopholes for example) will cause them to abandon play or cancel accounts outright rather than continue to tolerate people who feel that their only purpose in a day is to go out and find people to terrorize via griefing.
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- 480 I only grief griefers. I retaliate. If they're of the opposing faction I might corpse camp depending on the amount of griefing they have done to me. If they're of my own faction and I can't kill them, I harass them verbally.
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- 492 I don't let it affect me because it is just a game, but I find it troubling at how much people let it affect them outside of the game.
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- 494 In my experience the most effect griefing will have on people is annoyance. Playing MMO's you almost expect it to happen at some point. Spam and ganking the most likely to happen. It's annoying but that's it, it doesn't do anything beyond that.
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- 510 Players need to understand that in a social environment that MMOs provide, there are a few bad nuts that are bound to show up. They must understand what

they are up against, and what the motives of the griefer are so as to have a better understanding of how to react positively in such a situation, rather than making a mountain out of a molehill. Remember: it's making a mountain out of it that is what pleases the griefer in question, and only allows him further avenue to continue.

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- 517 Sometimes it's a coincidence or just a question of "opportunity" so to speak.
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- 520 I don't think companies do enough to stop griefing, and in fact expect players to take matters into their own hands. I used to report griefing when I was subjected to it or saw someone else being grieved, but after witnessing little to nothing being done about it, accepted it as part of the darker side of playing with and against a group of anonymous players. Like many, I developed a thick skin and simply stopped responding to it. I figure if these people confine their inner rage (or whatever motivates them to be griefers) to a game, they're not out beating puppies in the real world.
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- 523 You can only be told you're bad/dumb/ect so many times before you start to believe it yourself. People have very little respect for one another in games, they never see the other person so there's not a feeling of respect for a person.
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- 529 It only causes impact if you let it. People need to learn to cope on PvP server, get friends or go elsewhere.
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- 547 Griefing distracts from the game itself in a very negative way. It's like getting the car of your dreams, but someone flatten the tiers. Regardless of the kind of car it is, it's no longer able to perform its basic function. Most mmorpg are played for entertainment. Griefers destroy that experience. There for players tend to leave the game.
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- 553 Visit the eve-online forums... there has been a lot of whine and rage about carebears hating PvPers and PvPers hating carebears recently. Go back at least a few weeks. All the drama pisses me off sometimes and none of it is technically in game. Still, I don't think all PvP is griefing, esp in that game so I think the perceptions are bigger than the real thing sometimes. Much ado about nothing and all that.
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- 554 I've never been "labelled" a griefer.
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- 565 I will only 'grief' people who have and continuously grief other, weaker players. In my mind, that isn't griefing, it's justice.
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- 594 If you're impacted mentally by other players having fun, you probably shouldn't play multiplayer games.
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- 600 I feel the system coming up in GW2 goes a long way to solve these issues.
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- 612 It should be a motivation.
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- 619 Griefing brings down the game and the entire genre in general. There are several games that are much better for their community, and many, many games that are worse for it. Ninja looting and general jackassery are so rampant in WoW that I would never pug anything beyond the five mans that have the loot rules locked. I'm not going to carry a bunch of terribles in a raid just so the raid leader can steal whatever loot he wants because Blizzard does NOTHING about ninja looting. They even have a 'same faction griefing; clause in the ToS, but they don't

consider ninja'ing to be griefing. Their response is, "Get a guild and go with friends." That doesn't really fix the problem.

637 Griefing isn't enjoyable for the victims. (obviously) To a very large extent, the mechanics of a game can prevent griefing from taking place. It is in the developers' best interest to avoid griefing as much as possible, as people will leave games because of it. To give you some examples: Team Fortress 2. While not strictly speaking griefing in most cases. The Engineer class places down sentries, turrets that fire at other players automatically. This a) requires no skill from the player who places the sentry, and b) slows down the pace of the game. Engineers caused me to stop playing Team Fortress 2 on public servers altogether. I still played 6v6 competitively because people there realized the engineer wasn't a useful class, hence it was very rarely used. League of Legends: There are a million and one ways in which players can cause grief here. It is a team based game where the actions of your teammates can actually make the enemies stronger. This leads to lots of rage. Both from people being unintentionally bad at the game (and therefore spoiling the fun of their teammates, because they now no longer stand a chance against the more powerful enemy team) and from people intentionally 'feeding' (letting the enemies kill them so the enemies become stronger) the enemy team to grief their teammates. I don't, under any circumstances, play League of Legends with people I don't know. I only play the game if I had at least three other people to play with using a VoIP application. Literally every single MMORPG ever made with open-world PvP: Apart from Guild Wars and the upcoming sequel Guild Wars 2, every single MMORPG has gear-based, rather than skill based, PvP. Whether you are good at the game or not is irrelevant because people who have put more hours into it are stronger than you are because they have better items. This is an issue when a game has open-world PvP. It leads to frustration when you get killed by people who are a higher level than you, or have superior items. If someone is more skilled at something than myself, I honestly don't mind losing. In MMORPGs, however, fights are over before they've even started. No matter how good I am, my lvl 30 character will never beat the bored lvl 50 who's out looking for five minutes of fun. This is why I no longer play MMORPGs with open world PvP. Should there ever be an MMO with open world PvP that does not have an experience/item grind, I would gladly play it.

644 Reactions to griefing will differ from person to person. Some will try avoidance, some retaliation, some will laugh it off, some quit, and some turn to griefing themselves. Normally our morality comes into play, we cry out for fairness and justice. Sometimes we lose sight of the fact that these incidents aren't really that significant (although it can be, if it leaves the game and enters real life, it could become very personal). Once we take a step back from the game, I think most people realize how silly their worrying and indignation is. But in the heat of the moment, a person's reactions can be emotionally charged and short sighted. That's what we should try to avoid in ourselves as the victim. Me? I laugh it off as best I can.

659 Some people take the gaming way too personally. Some activities are performed by players explicitly to be aggravating, and that's pretty pathetic. If a person takes infrequent or light harassment in a game personally, however, they need to

take a step back and really analyze how they're spending their time. It's just a game; if it stops being fun, do something else.

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- 660 I'm in it to win it. Including griefing if i need to.
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- 676 i think many have little idea what pain or distress griefing can cause
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- 677 As someone who understands griefing, I'm not affected by it or I know how to avoid others trying to grief. Not all people are as aware, though. Retaliating rarely works if a griefer is the type who gets enjoyment out of it. Ignore, report, and get away from the griefer(s)
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- 680 When playing on SWG, specifically... the first year of TCPrime, I made it my mission to stop AFK'ing, this labelled me as a type of griefer and was avoided or targeted by the servers largest AFK guild. They quit, I didn't. I then proceeded to play without the grief they caused me by AFK'ing prime spawns 24/7.
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- 682 The impact depends on the "victim's" sensitivity and possible actual problems.
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- 684 Griefing is sometimes the only thing that motivates me to log in.
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- 711 Here goes one of my past stories for you. Several years ago in a game that shall remain nameless, me and a friend would spend all of our free time in a certain area that was only for the highest level characters. We would kill everyone of the opposing faction on sight, we became somewhat infamous on the server and almost always had people coming to this area to hunt us, or complaining about it on the forums, Others even came to watch from afar. One particularly memorable person (of the opposing faction) also liked to frequent this area daily which resulted in him dying over and over and over again (somewhere between 500-1000 times in the space of several months). This person tried almost everything possible (
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- 721 I feel that younger players or people with low self-esteem are more likely to be effected. Most incidents are isolated and are forgotten as they are deemed annoying but not important. When the victim knows the attacker it's different of course, but then it's similar to real world bullying.
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- 722 Griefing doesn't tend to actually affect anyone but new players. People who enjoy helping new players may be affected, as they spend a majority of their game type helping out those that were grieved. But for an experienced player such as myself, and most of a games population, griefing is usually just a minor inconvenience that can be easily over-come. Often, griefing a griefer in to submission isn't hard, as they enjoy dishing it out, but they often cannot take getting it back. To date I've made 2 griefers publicly announce that they were leaving the game due to griefing. Over-all, griefing only affects new players (unless it is an extreme case of exploitation griefing or hacking griefing). This is bad, because the game devs will often find themselves running out of new players, destroying any hopes at a stable population, unless they put in restrictions that often cause problems for the community as a whole, rather than just the griefers. Griefing itself doesn't cause much trouble, no. It's the things that developers do to stop griefing from having a negative impact on their population that often does. Game developers seldom "get it right" when trying to deal with griefers.
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- 726 It's the situation again in which the griefing happens that decides what the impact is. As example in WOW with the LFD/LFR it just isn't fun to play with those totally

random players so many try to avoid it. On the other hand you get used to being grieved in those situation so you don't think about them so often but they get annoying at the same time. It not for fun that you do dungeons anymore but because for points or something and you only use the LFD/LFR because you can't do those dungeons alone. It's not social anymore but something you have to do.

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- 731 It's minimal, most people will shrug it off. Those that don't probably can't handle situations, no matter how small, in real life either.
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- 739 Griefing causes people to react differently than they would. If I get corpse camped by someone, I'll do the same to them when they don't have their buddies backing them up like they did when they camp me. But if someone ninjas something from me, I won't go and ninja something from someone else. Basically if someone repeatedly targets me, I'll retaliate, if it's a few isolated events, it doesn't bother me.
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- 743 Its a game, who cares. They camp you? log on some other character for 5 mins. They do some verbal her~? ignore. They do something else? use ur brain.
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- 754 Griefing can ruin the game. I'd like to point out that I very very rarely grief, other than when someone is griefing me and I wanna retaliate against them. Even then, it takes quite a lot of griefing from them to get me as far as to retaliate. Once I reach that stage though, they will get it back tenfold. Usually I reach this stage when the griever is keeping me from playing the game, e.g. constant ganking, corpse camping. Those are probably the most annoying forms of griefing. It usually involves them having a high levelled character and myself having a low levelled character. I stand no chance and they keep killing me, and camp my corpse so I can't go anywhere. If they do this long enough, I will log my most powerful character, go to the location where my low levelled character is and proceed to gank and corpse camp them to the degree that they either give up or make a character for my faction and tell me to stop. I don't accept behavior like that. It's also very satisfying griefing the griever.
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- 759 I have often found new friends in my griefing activities, many people see the funny side of it and either join in or start a conversation
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- 778 I felt awful for the duration of the day, and played an alt the rest of the day.
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- 785 Having been on both sides of the spectrum, griefing can add a new dimension to gameplay. On one particular game a PVP server turned into an RP-PVP server. The more PVP-minded banded together and their apathy towards RP was perceived as a slight and became the spark for an amazing server war. The game largely sucked and content was non-existent, so my 'side' became the server bad guy. Each side became more entrenched and radicalized, engaging in their own Mai Lais and other Game-of-Thrones type shit. It was hands down the best experience I've ever had with a video game to date. Nobody likes a dick for the sake of being a dick, though.
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- 788 It makes people feel powerless and weak because there's little they can do to defend themselves.
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- 794 Some people think they know everything and get angry when someone points out otherwise.

- 809 My experience with Griefing seems to be just one player causing the problem, I don't think i have every seen groups of players doing this, with the exception of maybe corpse camping in World PVP type activities. The person is maybe somewhat of a loner or someone trying to be involved but going about it in an anti-social way.
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- 849 Griefing, true griefing, is bullying and should be treated as such.
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- 851 The very simple fact is games without PvP exist. If you can't stand to be killed, even if you're at a disadvantage, you shouldn't be playing a game where that it possible. People need to grow a pair if they want to come play in an environment that they do not fully control. I was grieved to an extreme as a newbie in Shadowbane. It didn't kill my love for the game or make me break down irl, but drove me to be a highly skilled pvper. I reserved griefing for the griefing guilds and individual players who do these things. A taste of their own medicine. If this negatively impacts their gaming, I would love it, but generally I get the best good job, and great fight tells from the griefers. Things in game only bother you if you let them. It's all just pixels and people need to learn to let stupid stuff go and get on with their lives. You're only impacted as much as you allow yourself to be by an optional activity (gaming) that is entirely anonymous.
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- 855 Life is chaos. I'm not static. What else needs to be said? I don't like something, so I initiate a change. I want to interact, so I force the interaction instead of waiting for one.
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- 868 Wasn't the previous one the same?
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- 907 I think griefing can affect casual gamers emotionally, and even make them quit some games, especially if the following conditions are true:- The game appeals to casual gamers mostly- The griefing in itself is a result of bad game design or flaws in game design- when there is no possibility to retaliate against the griefer
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- 921 I have always been correctly labelled as a griefer :)
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- 931 I feel that the impact of griefers decreases, simple because most mmo-players are mmo-veterans and thus they are aware of griefers upfront. they do expect them, and know how to handle with them. These mmo-vets also back up the new players, if possible
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- 932 Sometimes griefing causes people to 'rage quit' games, or it carries on into real life, affecting them mentally, possibly becoming one of the causes of depression. Most of the time though, it has no effect to people in real life
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- 935 A lot of people will log out or go somewhere safe (Meridian) to avoid the griefers if it's really bad. I know this because I am often in the same raid and they announce it or you can see they have disconnected.
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- 938 some griefing can be labelled unfairly, for instance my most common form of "griefing" was as a healer refusing to heal people, my girlfriend tanked and i healed, if there were members in the party who were ninja looting and so on or just plain annoying my girlfriend would drop aggro and i would stop healing them, while technically griefing it's for a better good of community moderating people in a sense, i didn't click that any of this was in retaliation because it wasn't retaliating because we were angry but rather trying to get the message that the gaming community won't stand for bad eggs in a sense, i think some thought has to be taken for what is griefing and what is simply community moderation.

- 942 people should grow up and realise it's a game. getting PKd is annoying but that's all. we don't live in carebear world.
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- 951 it makes people amusingly frustrated, considering it's just a game, if you're not having fun, log-out and do something else instead of complaining about it... but then, if they did, it wouldn't be as amusing to grief.
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- 956 The griefing I participated in was against griefers. Anti-PK style going after those who grief weaker players and being a more powerful player myself. I felt almost a moral obligation to take action with the goal of making the griefer quit the game.
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- 959 everyone grieves...its a part of the game and you shouldn't take griefing as a personal insult. Remember that it's just a game!
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- 964 I've seen people rage. HARD. No idea how gaming effects their personal lives but I'm guessing pretty damn good. As for me, I have a thick skin so there is absolutely nothing a griefer can do to cause me harm. I always know where the QUIT button is, I am not addicted to online gaming, I can easily find something away from the computer to busy myself. In that regard, sometimes the best defense against griefing is to simply walk away from the computer.
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- 981 If 2 clans are fighting over territory control in games that have territory control, it is acceptable during a rush to kill respawning players, preventing them from re-equipping, while your team triggers the mechanics to drop a siege stone. It sucks, but it's 10-15 minutes where you should be strategizing with your allies outside of game in skype or whatever communication line you use. It's only in group vs. group fights, and if you don't you won't meet your objective, to siege the city/village/town and take control of it. In a way territory control could be considered griefing, but it's the design of the game (darkfall for example) where one group can physically take a village/city/holding from another group of people that live there and enjoy using it. Those people have to find a territory they can take over, or ally with larger clans that have multiple cities that need to stay populated and defended from all the other groups looking to siege territory.
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- 983 I think it only effects the socially maladjusted who can't come to grips that it's a game and they should get over it much more than they do.
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- 987 For me personally it has made me question the wisdom of playing a MMORPG, as the fact that the Internet anonymity gives people a feeling of invulnerability and there is lots of times in an MMORPG you must play with others, and you therefor have to develop a thick skin. That does not feel like fun to me, and I play these games for fun
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- 992 Griefing actually encourage honest players to be social and band together. We "griefers" get a bad rap but many of us (I am included in this group) do it for the challenge of having multiple targets banded together to kill us. I have rarely done it just to be an "ass".
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- 1001 It's hit or miss. Even for myself. Sometimes I could care less, sometimes it dramatically alters my night.
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- 1005 One thing to note is class balance (or imbalance). If there is not class balance, griefing can occur. As in certain abilities that can't be countered or negated. Because some classes can't compete, some people will stop playing or stop playing that character to play a different class. This avoids the situation. Another type of griefing is 'using.' Being friendly to that person by helping them, inviting

them to the guild, etc. Then later, take their stuff, kill them, etc. I witnessed this in EvE where a friend got invited to join Goonsquad. They escorted his ship, and helped him with some of his stuff in their space cargo mover ship. Well half way out there, killed him, took his stuff etc. This is after a week of befriending him. Oh, here's a good one. Before you mention verbal assaults. How about emotes? In DAoC, you can't talk or type to the other side. You can emote to them. so you can /rofl x10.... that would piss alot of people off. Mythic had to put a cap on how fast you can emote.

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- 1019 Everyone has differing opinions on what Griefing is. Which is fine, but when you put all those people in a pot, don't expect it not to boil over. Mislabeling occurs often with griefing, specifically on certain server types. ie I don't consider PKing griefing unless the opponent is a newbie, yet I think players should be left to their own accord and police the game environment when it comes to PKs.
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- 1020 The MMOTPG communities function in the same way as a high school does. The weak will be the bullied, the new ones will be subjected to trials to determine their place, the dumb ones will be made fun of, the weird ones will be ignored.
-
- 1023 I feel that personally, player killing has honed and improved my skills as a player. Though I may be rare, I often target challenging players or players in a group to see if I can overcome them on my own or in a small group. Often times my griefing is performed in retaliation to someone else's actions, be they griefing or otherwise. I believe that it is good for game developers to offer PvE and PvP servers so that people can have a choice of what ruleset to play with. By the same token, however, players on PvP servers do not have the right to complain about being player killed in that environment, given the fact that it was their voluntary choice to participate in that ruleset. I generally believe that game developers should stay out of individual griefing disputes between players and allow players to resolve these matters on their own, either through retaliation or through leaving PvP servers and playing on PvE servers instead. I have a zero tolerance policy for game exploiting and cheating, however. I do not participate in such actions, nor will I tolerate friends or guild mates doing so. Cheating and exploiting defeats the entire purpose of the game from my perspective, and it destroys the ability for players to resolve griefing incidents through legitimate play and social organization.
-
- 1038 From a personal perspective Griefing has a minimal impact however am sure it can have a greater impact on more sensitive personality types
-
- 1041 I've played MMO's for quite a while and don't really feel like griefing itself really too terribly disturbs me. However, I have seen that griefing new players is very destructive to a community. I mention Mortal Online throughout this, as it's a pretty good example of where griefing occurs often (especially against new players). In such, I was a Thief... which is commonly thought of as a griefing profession -- it seems that taking a small portion of someone's stuff while they're not paying attention is far, far worse than suddenly getting killed and losing ALL of your stuff! That always struck me as a peculiar topic on what's acceptable and what's not in another player's mind. However, unlike most Thieves, I would refuse to steal from new players. Often times, they had so little money it was just cruel to steal from them. While the game might very well be based around 'griefing', a brand new player can get discouraged very easily. And suddenly losing the few

silvers they worked the past hour for is a great way to do just that. I think the merciless nature of that game in particular is what can shock and scare away players.

1049 i think that people play these games to get away from their day to day life and to wind down and they don't always want to deal with the stupid people who have nothing better to do/think it's fun to grief people.so sometimes people just get frustrated and snap back or quit playing

1050 The reasons people do it for is not healthy for the game and the industry. I don't like that i grieved occasionally. I don't consider player killing 'griefing' though. I started pking on a game where it was a challenge. Nowadays everyone does it and for the wrong reasons granted it's a game where u can. Those are scum to me in game and i don't interact with such players. The reasons i stated earlier, and this increases the number of 'griefers' and thus there's too much impact it makes. If i pull numbers out of my ass, 0,5% of a gaming population should pk/grief like in the old days and it'll be fine. Np.

1056 I do not let griefing get to me and advise others to do the same. It is a waste of time and energy to let another person manipulate your mental and emotional state and to respond to that attempted manipulation.

1060 griefing is bad for gaming ,.verbally or ganking an deliberately stalking them in world , it makes people not want to play, than in turn insult them on top of it name calling etc ,

1076 In my experience, griefing is more likely to influence players that are somehow limited in their gaming (e.g. limited time or resources) or that are seriously affected by the griefing (e.g. being subject to griefing while trying to complete an achievement, especially when the achievement is beyond the players reach due to the griefing, e.g. an event based achievement that fails due to the griefing where the griefing pushes the player beyond the timeframe of the event)

1083 I am very bad at being stealthy when being bad, but insanely good when off the job. Basically I blend in when doing nothing but when I am griefing I glow.

1087 The mood becomes vulgar and the people more ignorant because of it, it brings lowly sentiments out of the players, as they feel like getting on the level of the griefers. Especially since more and more do it, they become the majority expressing themselves openly, whereas the more moderate and bright persons don't make their voice heard much anymore even though they might be there. Also some people somehow restrain their "griefing" attitudes and one simple thing like a spammer or clueless person can make them come out of the closet so to speak. Griefing and trolling in a game even between anonymous people, can sometimes be rough for sensitive persons, who will possibly need to find comfort in some shape or quit the game.

1091 Griefing affects the social aspect of the MMO. It is akin to cyber bullying. Since one of the main focuses of an MMO is the social interaction, griefing causes an overall negative impact on the game itself.

1107 Some griefers use the system to their advantage by throwing complaint tickets at one person until that character is banned. A popularity contest, whoever they can get on their side to help snub others. Typical bullying practices.

1126 No one has ever actually called me a griefer, in games or on forums. I see myself as a defender of the weak, a corrector of misinformation. If people would stop being assholes to each other, I'd be out of work entirely in both regards and games like RIFT would not be hemorrhaging players.

1135 griefing is fun and i love to do it.

1159 The majority of them simply do it because they feel they can get away with it. Unfortunately, game masters are not omnipotent, and they sometimes don't see things the same way I do.

1182 Some people NEED to be grieved. Some people need that reality check, and need it often and regularly, and if they get it, they usually end up becoming better people. I'm a prime example of that. Getting grieved taught me how to take a joke and not let things get to me, as well as how to laugh at myself.

1183 Griefing, unless its retaliation, makes you an all-round hated person.

Appendix G: Plain Language Information Statement for Potential Interviewees

Thank you for your participation between June and August 2012 in the research project about the act of griefing and its implications in Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games (MMORPGs).

At the end of that survey, you voluntarily provided your email in order for us to contact you to further our research through interviews. You were one of only 20 individuals selected among many voluntary participants to conduct email-based interview questions with. Please note that these interviews are voluntary and that you are free to withdraw at any time, including any unprocessed data previously supplied. The interviews will be conducted through email to send and receive questions and answers, which ensures your anonymity remains intact. Please read the following regarding the interview procedure, and if you wish to continue, instructions will be given at the end of this email.

**University of Ballarat:
SCHOOL OF Science, Information Technology & Engineering**

PROJECT TITLE:	Causes, Magnitude and Implications of Griefing in Massively Multiplayer Role-Playing Games
PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER:	Dr Charlynn Miller
OTHER/STUDENT RESEARCHERS:	Dr Peter Vamplew (Associate Supervisor) Leigh Achterbosch (PhD Student)

Firstly, as a recap, I have provided the initial information you received from the survey you participated in:

Every day in online games accessed through an Internet connection, an unknown percentage of users are experiencing what is known as 'Griefing'. Griefing is a term used in online games to describe when a player within a multiplayer online environment intentionally disrupts another player's game experience for their own personal enjoyment or gain. The authors will explore the following questions; what are the causes and implications of griefing in MMORPGs, and what magnitude of griefing exists in this genre? The intention is to contribute new research to the Information Technology areas of online games and griefing, expanding our knowledge in these areas.

Should you accept the invitation to be interviewed you will receive an email with a set of questions designed to fill gaps that the survey could not fulfil, and to answer questions that the results of the survey brought up. You will not be asked for, nor do we want you to provide any identifying data during the interview questions. Once you complete the questions and return them, they will be analysed and you may receive further questions to clarify or expand upon your answers.

Some participants may experience discomfort in answering questions relating to victimisation resulting from grieving. The authors would like to direct you to seek assistance from international voluntary emotional support groups such as [Lifeline International](#) or one of their [recommended support groups](#) should you feel the need to do so.

Data from these interviews shall be stored on University of Ballarat servers, with results and analysis contributing to the student researcher's PhD thesis. When analysis of both the initial survey and the interviews are complete, the authors shall provide a written summary of results which can be obtained from the same location in which you obtained access to the initial survey.

Instructions – If you wish to proceed with the interviews, please reply to this email invitation that you wish to commence with the interviews. When we receive your consent, you will receive an email containing the initial interview questions.

If you have any questions, or you would like further information regarding the project titled **Causes, Magnitude and Implications of Griefing in Massively Multiplayer Role-Playing Games** please contact the Principal Researcher, **Dr Charlynn Miller** of the School of **Science, Information Technology and Engineering – University of Ballarat**

PH: +61 3 5327 9545

EMAIL: c.miller@ballarat.edu.au

Should you (i.e. the participant) have any concerns about the ethical conduct of this research project, please contact the University of Ballarat Ethics Officer, Research Services, University of Ballarat, PO Box 663, Mt Helen VIC 3353. Telephone: (03) 5327 9765, Email: ub.ethics@ballarat.edu.au

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Appendix H: Interview Transcripts

H.1 Griefed Transcripts

H.1.1 Griefed (Survey ID 142)

You have identified yourself as a MMORPG player that is subjected to griefing on a regular basis while playing MMORPGs.

- a) **How long had you played MMORPGs before you were first subjected to griefing and how long have you played MMORPGs in total?** Around 8 years and 6 months
- b) **What was your reaction to it at the time?** First case of griefing was during my first MMORPG "Runescape" and they had a report function for ingame rule breaking which mostly dealt with it, but never stopped it cropping up so case by case I just reported it and got along with my ingame goals
- c) **How would you react today if the same thing happened?** Just report it ingame if they have a option and get along with what I'm doing

Being subjected to griefing:

- a) **Do you have any ideas what has incited the griefer to target you? If so, what?** Their own sole enjoyment out of provoking someone or possibly to provoke others into becoming distracted and losing the game
- b) **What type of griefing causes the most impact upon you and how does it affect your character, and yourself in the real world? Can you give any examples?** Some griefing can affect my ingame players from preventing my character to level up or gain rewards but when this occurs majority of the time I would of logged out and played something else but in some cases in games which had PvP I would kill them just to get rid off them, in some RPG's I would receive a few debuffs or penalty points but its worth it
- c) **What actions do you take (both in-game and in real life) in response to being griefed?** IF the game has a good and working report function I would report it just to get such a player dealt with the legit way... but sadly a lot of MMO's have lousy report functions forcing me tom just get over it or react (react in the way they want)

During our study, we have noted that those subjected to grief play in general rated customization of their avatar as one of the highest motivational factors to play MMORPGs.

- a) **Would you agree with this and why? Or why not?** Yes, mostly because customizing your character in game makes you mostly unique as something you have made in appearance and progress effort and time wise
- b) **What types of customization have you applied to your avatar that you believe may incite griefers to target you?** In one example recently in World of tanks, I had a Australian flag on my tank and a American player said racist remarks trying

to provoke me into a argument during a heated ingame tank battle that required more attention

During our study, we have noted that those subjected to grief play in general rated character advancement and learning the game mechanics as two very high motivational factors.

- a) **Would you agree with these? Why or why not?** Yes but I never bother bother maxing out character advancement or progress that far and often give up due to terrible communitys and griefing or terrible game
- b) **Do you feel that being motivated by advancement and game mechanics are valuable to a victim of griefing? Why or why not?** Yes because if they are a victim of griefing and have no great advancement or mechanics to be motivated then why would they bother with a game and community that can be some degrading?

In general, those that were often subjected to griefing considered the 7 actions below (of the 15 proposed actions) as heavily skewed towards always being a form of griefing:

- a) **Do you agree with the assessment of these actions as acts of griefing? Why or why not?** Ofcourse it is griefing if the griefer is doing it to gain a advantage or dominance over another player and the ingame character
- b) **Have you been subjected to any of these actions yourself? If so how did you react and feel afterwards?**
 - 1) **Verbal Harassment**, yes and sometimes ignore it but other times I have reacted inappropriately after years of experiencing it ingame myself
 - 2) **Ninja Looting**, in Conqueronline I used to PK anybody who ninja looted me, other games its harder to deal with and I have just waited around to ninja loot something back off the other player
 - 3) **Corpse/Spawn Camping**, sometimes it is part of the game and is considered a tactic by some I guess
 - 4) **Preying on New Players**, no
 - 5) **Scamming**, yes and most the time I report it
 - 6) **Team Disruption**, yes mostly ignore it and focus on the game
 - 7) **Event Disruption**, no I dont really like events it attracts trouble and silly people

In general, those that were often subjected to griefing only considered one action (of the 15 proposed actions) as skewed towards not being a form of griefing, this was Mob Camping:

- a) **Do you agree with the assessment of this actions not being an act of griefing? Why or why not?** Well it can be a form of griefing, in grenada espada I

think from memory I played during a beta it was full of bots designed to just mob camp 24/7 and ruin it for new players trying to level up or do quests and daily tasks which ruined the game for many, but in some games its required to progress which is a poor game design IMHO

- b) **Have you been subjected to Mob Camping yourself? If so how did you react and feel afterwards?** It happens in a lot of games its considered part off the game too me but eventually if you camp a particular mob yourself you will get it

It was found in our analysis that all other actions (not listed in the 2 previous questions), were not heavily skewed towards either always or never being a form of griefing, by those often subjected to griefing. Do you agree with this, and can you give any examples? No matter what is made available in online games there is a group of players willing to abuse it and grief others, simple chatting with other players is used to grief in every game.

H.1.2 Griefed (Survey ID 253)

You have identified yourself as a MMORPG player that is subjected to griefing on a regular basis while playing MMORPGs.

- a) **How long had you played MMORPGs before you were first subjected to griefing and how long have you played MMORPGs in total?** My first MMORPG was Guild Wars 1 (Prophecies), which I started playing in July 2006. I've been involved in Guild Wars 1 and 2 and tried out several other MMORPGs since then, so in total I've played MMORPGs for about nine years now. I didn't notice muchgriefing in Guild Wars 1 until around 2008 or so, at which point it started becoming a fairly regular problem.
- b) **What was your reaction to it at the time?** When I first realized that other players were directing griefing-related behavior at me, I (not really understanding the phenomenon at the time) tried to defend myself using reason and logic, which ended up doing nothing to solve the problem and only made it easier for them to keep disturbing me.
- c) **How would you react today if the same thing happened?** If I tried to reason with someone and became aware they were acting foolishly just to get a reaction out of me or to bolster their own ego, I would put them on a block/ignore list and basically forget about them.

Being subjected to griefing:

- a) **Do you have any ideas what has incited the griefer to target you? If so, what?** From what I've seen over the course of the last nine years, the main trigger for griefers is when I (or another player) attempts to honestly state a fact or opinion in public/local/general/"all" chat. Basically, whenever someone attempts to be serious about the game or references a serious, "political," or "philosophical" opinion, trolls/griefers are drawn to the resulting debate like moths to a flame. They then proceed to use irrational/logically impermissible arguments or logical fallacies to

ridicule whatever is being discussed or the players involved in the discussion. In other words, whenever someone appears to be “taking the game too seriously,” the griefers are sure to be close by.

- b) **What type of griefing causes the most impact upon you and how does it affect your character, and yourself in the real world? Can you give any examples?** One instance in particular almost caused me to stop playing Guild Wars 1. I’m the leader of a guild in the game, and I was recruiting in the general chat channel in a fairly highly populated area frequented by new players (my guild specializes in helping new players learn about the game). Several griefers who also frequented that area persistently slandered my guild by saying things such as “don’t join his guild, they drown puppies and kill kittens,” accusing my guild of being a cult and the like. I reported those players several times, but apparently they were not guilty of a bannable offense. I felt that I could not ignore those griefers, because if I couldn’t see the lies they were posting, I couldn’t counter their accusations and assure new players that what they said was untrue. I’m fairly certain that their griefing actually did prevent people from joining—since my target audience was brand-new players, how would they know who to listen to? This form of griefing caused the most impact on me because it not only damaged my guild’s reputation and my personal image in the community, but also disturbed me personally. Having to deal with these griefers on a near-daily basis took a toll on my emotional health, and at one point I was a nervous wreck for several days from the stress it caused.
- c) **What actions do you take (both in-game and in real life) in response to being grieved?** Whenever I recognize a griefer, I put them on ignore, leave the party if I was doing a group event with them, and try my best to forget about them.

Describe how you feel in relation to your need for _____ after being subjected to griefing as opposed to before.

- a) **Autonomy.** In the instance I described above, the griefers essentially removed my autonomy with respect to being free to recruit for my guild. Generally, however, griefers have little to do with my sense of autonomy because (at least in Guild Wars 1 and 2) there is virtually no way for griefers to prevent other players from achieving their goals.
- b) **Competence.** Griefing has little effect on my sense of competence. Without trying to sound immodest, I am a very competent player. I rarely have trouble learning the mechanics of a game and using strategy and tactics to use those mechanics to my advantage. Because I have a good understanding of my strengths and weaknesses as a player, griefers are unable to affect me in that respect. In fact, many griefers display their own insecurities and lack of skill in their attempts to disturb others.
- c) **Relatedness.** Griefing has a definite impact on my sense of relatedness with the in-game community. Whenever a griefer attacks me, it is generally because I am trying to explain my point of view about something. The griefer uses lies, emotional appeals, and logical fallacies to skew the community’s perception of me (or another

player) and thus is able to turn the community against a particular person. Since the goal of the griefer often is to incite negative emotions in others, one of the best ways to accomplish this is to polarize the community at large.

During our study, we have noted that those subjected to grief play in general rated customization of their avatar as one of the highest motivational factors to play MMORPGs.

- a) **Would you agree with this and why? Or why not?** Customization is one factor for me, but definitely not one of the highest. For me, gameplay is the most important aspect of a MMORPG. Aesthetics are an added bonus, but I prefer substance over style.
- b) **What types of customization have you applied to your avatar that you believe may incite griefers to target you?** I have never experienced any negative feedback based on my character's appearance, probably because I tend to make my characters somewhat average and nondescript.

During our study, we have noted that those subjected to grief play in general rated character advancement and learning the game mechanics as two very high motivational factors.

- a) **Would you agree with these? Why or why not?** I highly agree. For me, learning the rules of the game and figuring out how to be an effective player are vital to my enjoyment. It is perhaps because of this desire for competence that griefers are able to troll others by displaying or embracing incompetence.
- b) **Do you feel that being motivated by advancement and game mechanics are valuable to a victim of griefing? Why or why not?** I feel that these forms of motivation are valuable to victims of griefing. Again, people with these values and goals tend to be serious about the game and therefore are more susceptible to griefers, who seek to undermine that seriousness with frivolity and irreverence.

In general, those that were often subjected to griefing considered the 7 actions below (of the 15 proposed actions) as heavily skewed towards always being a form of griefing:

- a) **Do you agree with the assessment of these actions as acts of griefing? Why or why not?** I agree that these are forms of griefing because these types of behavior are specifically intended to frustrate, bully, intimidate, or upset other players.
- b) **Have you been subjected to any of these actions yourself? If so how did you react and feel afterwards?** Out of these seven, I have only been subjected to verbal harassment and team disruption. Verbal harassment has caused me significant distress in the past, but team disruption is only moderately annoying.

In general, those that were often subjected to griefing only considered one action (of the 15 proposed actions) as skewed towards not being a form of griefing, this was Mob Camping:

- a) **Do you agree with the assessment of this actions not being an act of griefing? Why or why not?** I agree that mob camping isn't a form of griefing; it's just poor game design that forces people to compete for scarce resources.
- b) **Have you been subjected to Mob Camping yourself? If so how did you react and feel afterwards?** I have never been subjected to mob camping, but only because the MMORPGs I've played have loot and enemy respawn systems that don't force players to resort to it.

It was found in our analysis that all other actions (not listed in questions 6 and 7), were not heavily skewed towards either always or never being a form of griefing, by those often subjected to griefing. Do you agree with this, and can you give any examples? I have no experience with any of the other actions, except for spamming, which I think is always griefing. If a player repeats the same message more than two or three times within a reasonable period of time, there can be no question that he or she is either 1) immature and expects immediate favorable results or 2) griefing.

H.1.3 Griefed (Survey ID 372)

You have identified yourself as a MMORPG player that is subjected to griefing on a regular basis while playing MMORPGs.

- a) **How long had you played MMORPGs before you were first subjected to griefing and how long have you played MMORPGs in total?** I estimate I had only played for about 15-20 hours before I was first subjected to griefing. As of today I have played MMORPGs for about 4000 hours over a 9 year period.
- b) **What was your reaction to it at the time?** I was young and quite naïve at the time, so I was actually shocked that people would be so cruel to eachother and annoy others in a place that was about having fun.
- c) **How would you react today if the same thing happened?** Over the years I've gotten so used to griefers being there that I hardly notice they're even there; I automatically ignore them and tend not to care about what they're doing.

Being subjected to griefing:

- a) **Do you have any ideas what has incited the griefer to target you? If so, what?** I think "targets" are random selected in a majority of the cases.
- b) **What type of griefing causes the most impact upon you and how does it affect your character, and yourself in the real world? Can you give any examples?** That would be spamming. It doesn't affect my character, but in the real world I could (rarely) get slightly annoyed, especially if the spam disrupts a conversation that is important to me.

- c) **What actions do you take (both in-game and in real life) in response to being grieved?** In-game: I usually add the griefer to a block/ignore list, sometimes move to a different area of the game. Real life: nothing.

Describe how you feel in relation to your need for _____ after being subjected to griefing as opposed to before.

- a) **Autonomy.**
- b) **Competence.**
- c) **Relatedness.**

The same as before. For me griefing has never had any effect on any of these things.

During our study, we have noted that those subjected to grief play in general rated customization of their avatar as one of the highest motivational factors to play MMORPGs.

- a) **Would you agree with this and why? Or why not?** I agree with it. MMORPGs are often played for (several) dozens of hours and looking at a badly created character for all that time can potentially spoil the game experience or enjoyment.
- b) **What types of customization have you applied to your avatar that you believe may incite griefers to target you?** Coloring.
- c) **What coloring are you referring to? Armor, skin, something else? And why do you think it's a reason they have targeted you?** I meant armor color. Dying armor in a way that doesn't really fit in the game world (for example bright pink) can incite griefers, I think.

During our study, we have noted that those subjected to grief play in general rated character advancement and learning the game mechanics as two very high motivational factors.

- a) **Would you agree with these? Why or why not?** I agree. Both contribute to the experience and enjoyment of the game; doing the same thing over and over for the duration of the game is boring and a game can hardly be played properly without first learning the game mechanics (related to Competence).
- b) **Do you feel that being motivated by advancement and game mechanics are valuable to a victim of griefing? Why or why not?** Not any more valuable than they are to non-victims. I think griefing rarely has any effect on these motivation factors.

In general, those that were often subjected to griefing considered the 7 actions below (of the 15 proposed actions) as heavily skewed towards always being a form of griefing:

- a) **Do you agree with the assessment of these actions as acts of griefing? Why or why not?** I agree. All of these would negatively affect the game experience.

b) **Have you been subjected to any of these actions yourself? If so how did you react and feel afterwards?**

1) **Verbal Harassment** Yes. I block/ignore them and move on.

2) **Ninja Looting** No.

3) **Corpse/Spawn Camping** No.

4) **Preying on New Players** No.

5) **Scamming** No.

6) **Team Disruption** Yes. Kick the griefer out of the team (if possible), then find a new teammate and move on. Slightly sad because of time wasted.

7) **Event Disruption** No.

In general, those that were often subjected to griefing only considered one action (of the 15 proposed actions) as skewed towards not being a form of griefing, this was Mob Camping:

a) **Do you agree with the assessment of this action not being an act of griefing? Why or why not?** I agree. A “mob” isn't owned by anyone. Though I suppose mob camping could be perceived as egotistical, I wouldn't consider it griefing.

b) **Have you been subjected to Mob Camping yourself? If so how did you react and feel afterwards?** No.

It was found in our analysis that all other actions (not listed in questions 6 and 7), were not heavily skewed towards either always or never being a form of griefing, by those often subjected to griefing. Do you agree with this, and can you give any examples? I disagree. I think all actions except 7 and 11 are always a form of griefing.

H.1.4 Griefed (Survey ID 855)

Preface

If I remember well, when I answered the original survey I was somewhat cynical about it, and focused mostly on my previous experiences. What I wrote now is honest, if anything doesn't match this set of questions takes precedence over my previous entry.

1.a) How long had you played MMORPGs before you were first subjected to griefing and how long have you played MMORPGs in total?

I've played MMORPGs*** (note: definitions differ) since 2003, and experienced griefing since day 1, regardless of the setting (in game: chat lobby, private/public game instance, open world communications, interaction with other players; outside game: forum messaging). The first MMORPG I've picked up for online play was Diablo 2 with its expansion Lord of Destruction, shortly after I've branched off and also played MU Online.

My First MMORPG that I truly loved (because of its community, development philosophy, quality of service, actual story content and gameplay mechanics) was Guild Wars which I picked up shortly before 2005's Christmas. 2 years later down the road I've branched off to Cabal Online for a change of mood, only to ditch it after 9 months (with short recurring comebacks).

When GW's active development ceased and my favored GW guild disbanded (a band of 14 trusted members that were a result of guild split over leadership disputes), I've ventured for a short while to S.U.N. Online and Vindictus, only to get emotionally and mentally tired of them and put a definitive end to playing this kind of MMORPGs, or that kind of MMOs in general.

Following my year-long hiatus of not playing any MMORPGs at all, I've decided to resurface in Guild Wars on summer 2009, and played it fairly actively until may 2010, trying to get a good hold of my Hall of Monuments, a "Guild Wars Legacy Players" service for upcoming Guild Wars 2, which I've eagerly waiting for since its earlier announcements. Between that short time period of 2009 and 2010, my gaming philosophy shifted back to the moment when I started to enjoy MMORPGs the most - the social aspect, tight-knit guild communities of trusted friends, and trusted friends in general (it happened for the first time with 14-man guild I've mentioned, and while the guild lasted only for a year, it was one of two best experiences I've had in MMORPGs, and one of four best with people in general).

Without going into personally identifying details, I've made a friend for life at that 2009-2010 period and since then we meet to this day, regardless if it's Guild Wars 2 or Guild Wars. The only reason we both log on is to see each other, viewing MMORPGs in general as a social platform with themepark activities to foster that communication and provide entertainment, rather than primarily a game or entertainment in itself (I used to hold that belief starting with heavily competition-oriented, hostile and ruthless environments of MMORPGs I played since 2003, the only notable exception to the rule being Guild Wars franchise that changed this view over time).

Both of us are also fairly burned by generally hostile and anti-social design of most multiplayer games, and the kind of communities they breed - if not for each other, we wouldn't pick any MMO or multiplayer game for that matter ever again. Additionally, we also have an extensive history of in-game griefing, with her getting the additional slap to the face for being a woman (gender stereotyping and abuse when found out, otherwise the emotional strain of not being allowed to trust people with own name and gender in fear of losing them - her Lineage 2's episode was a fairly nasty example of this kind of behavior, unfortunately it's not devoid in GW franchise either).

With the coming Christmas this year, it'll be a full decade of playing MMORPGs, or multiplayer games in general (the other games I played were Warcraft III with expansion, League of Legends, Heroes of Newerth, DoTA 2).

*** Why definitions differ, a couple examples:

- when Diablo 2 launched, it was considered a sequel to Diablo and not really labeled as MMO(RPG) - rather, it was understood to be a classic western Hack & Slash game, with strong multiplayer elements (as an MMORPGs it was simply lobby-based and instanced, there are examples of such games mutually referred to as multiplayer Action/Hack & Slash games AND MMORPGs - chief example being Vindictus, which is listed as an MMO by major MMO news outlets and communities, even if it has exactly the same system as it's decade-long hack & slash predecessor)
- either for marketing reasons or commonly held beliefs, MMORPGs that don't follow a strict gear/stat progression and/or don't have persistent, open world (neither of these being a defining feature of either MMOs or MMORPGs) are often classified, either by it's own publishers/developers and/or community as CORPGs (Cooperative Role-Playing Games) or Hack & Slash/Action Multiplayer Games instead (example: Guild Wars was labeled as MMORPG and CORPG by it's developers simultaneously when it launched, but on the announcement of GW2 rhetoric changed to "GW was not really a MMORPG, it had no persistent world, it was lobby-based" to shrug off popular criticism)
- the issue of genre evolution and genre mixing in game industry; the financial and social systems dominant in eastern MMORPGs and scarcity of western-published MMOs during first years of "MMO boom" in western hemisphere contributed to a stereotypical image of what constitutes MMORPG gameplay; currently MMO is understood as technology, service & social experiences it provides to vast groups of people first, the gameplay itself being totally irrelevant (e.g. mixing of classical RPG elements with turn-based and real-time strategy elements as part of the game, themepark gameplay, different means of progression, different economic models and social hierarchy, etc)

1.b) What was your reaction to it at the time?

As I was new to multiplayer games in general, as well as their communities (on top of being 12 years old, as much as I was mature for my age, I still didn't have the thick skin, insight, patience, empathy and perspective of today), my reactions to being grieved varied greatly and often escalated into desperate fight-backs to defend own dignity. From the very onset I learned by hard that abuse is not only widespread but generally accepted, as a means of making friends and enemies both and conducting business in general (starting from playful competition and friendly teasing, to all-out war on other people, their guilds, their clans, their friends - not even them as "players" or their avatars, but them as individual persons).

Especially in the early period (2003-2005, MU Online and Diablo II), the way to get into guilds/clans, progress (items, levels) and maintain personal integrity was to exert controlled violence. Fighting over resource nodes, loot, farming spots, dungeon entry, special access zones. Convincing others by the argument of force and wit that our words and feelings also matter, in the game's and guild's social hierarchy. Purposefully creating tension with recently met strangers and guild members, to "toughen them up", see if they can work in a team environment, shrug off minor offences, show a sense of humour and group camaraderie, loyalty to own guild or party's interest, ability to make personal sacrifices without expecting an immediate reward. Rites of passage, probation periods, guild and group votes, leadership politics. Ability to lead, ability to follow or "go home" if you don't fit.

There was also a dark side to this, however, and subsequent degeneration of people and entire groups of people. Uncontrolled grieving, national, racial, ethnic and religious, politically-inspired bigotry. Condemnation of entire guilds and server communities, public and private "black lists", desperate damage control by the leadership, group ostracism, picking sides, sexual harassment, hijacking personal relationships, hacking accounts, e-mails and computers, purposefully leaking personally identifiable information including corporate documents and job history. For the bigger part message has always been clear: flow with the mainstream, follow orders or issue them and take responsibility, fight, fight, fight, pick your fights carefully, fight, fight, fight, exploit others to own goals, fight, fight, fight, never show a weakness, fight, fight, fight. Fight.

I guess I've grown tired of fighting just to survive, make friends and have a good time - and while I was never a subject of targeted harassment (on ethnic, religious etc. grounds), as long as I was part of such games and their communities, I was subject to the system. And the system was rotten, even if it was not fully responsible for people and the choices they make. Some games make a continued effort to change the system (Guild Wars), only to make a step forward and three steps backward with a sequel (Guild Wars 2), too afraid of deviating from the norm and alienating traditionally-minded people, or even dare to pursue the impossible dream of creating a game for everyone, even if the system clearly favors one group only, and puts it on pedestal for everyone to see.

1.c) How would you react today if the same thing happened?

Griefing in moderation (means retaliatory grieving takes the place or doesn't, and if it does good thought is put into it). In another words, my reaction would be pretty much the same as if I was subject to abuse not in front of PC, but in the workplace, on the street or home. Depending on how close I am to the other people in question, I would address them differently. One thing for sure, I would never pursue an open conflict, seek harm or derive pleasure from inflicting emotional pain. While I was still new to multiplayer games, I found it fairly difficult to maintain a level head at all times, discern friendly jabs from all-out hostility or hidden malicious intent - the result was I'd overreact, or go on a petty vendetta until I grew tired of it and forgot the incident.

The difference between now and then is awareness. Previously I would get thrown into somebody else's "game", this time around I make the judgment call in full knowledge of the consequences, taking personal responsibility. Having a higher goal, purpose or motivation is a big part of why I can still stand the grieving in all it's forms and don't condemn the act of grieving itself regardless of it's context, but rather make a call whether it was appropriate for the audience and served a justified purpose (for the purpose of your research, replacing "griefing" with "conflict" wouldn't change the underlying meaning). I also make a conscious effort of not forcefully socializing with people and communities totally in opposition to my own beliefs, and not supporting a game or system that encourages online savagery and barbarism, dehumanizing experience. The only way forward is to address others in a game as persons, not homogenized "players" or their mythical masks-avatars.

2.a) Do you have any ideas what has incited the griefer to target you? If so, what?

Opportunity. Personal interest. Psychological compensation for abuse throughout the day. Innate drive to derive pleasure from suffering and harm, or other mental and spiritual defects of personality. Too many to list, and I partly answered this question in above paragraphs. I don't have any particular disabilities or insecurities that either show when I'm interacting with other people online, or could be exploited by them. I'm content with myself and what I do with my life.

2.b) What type of griefing causes the most impact upon you and how does it affect your character, and yourself in the real world? Can you give any examples?

The emotional impact is dependent on so many factors, it's difficult to find a single, most identifiable factor. Instead, I'll list situations that give me most grief:

- a) emotional suffering of my friend, regardless whether it was caused by an incident in-game or outside it
- b) judging people by appearances, misguided or perverted ideals (e.g. the case of abuse me and my friend were subject to in a guild owned by fundamentalist evangelist, incident from 3 years ago)
- c) refusing people entry or participation in content, group exclusivity that goes beyond objective criteria of discrimination (false beliefs on profession/class/build and individual person's performance and knowledge, very intrusive and hostile forms of risk management and group leadership)
- d) totally baseless hostility and rudeness with no justifiable reason, or extreme disregard for other people out of selfish gain (including systemic abuse, e.g. mob stealing, ninja looting etc. - it happens because it's possible, if not totally endorsed and encouraged; the one exception I can tolerate to an extent are "rogue-like" MMOs targeted for a very niche audience, e.g. Darkfall: Unholy Wars - in that case player should very well know what he's getting into, and treat predatory game rules in the spirit of sport, competition - griefing is still griefing regardless of context, however)
- e) emotional blackmail

Now that I don't play MMORPGs that totally limit the content and progression if you don't subject yourself to abuse, my character is fairly independent of the judgment and scrutiny of others. Important point, however: were I a new player with no friends or people to count on, it's entirely possible I'd subject myself to nearly all forms of abuse and fall for the systemic trap regardless of the MMO I played. As much as MMO or MMORPG might try to encourage different players to associate with and play in cohesive, self-sustaining communities holding on to standards in accordance with individual player preference, "breaking" the proverbial ice practically necessitates social friction and conflict. MMOs may be great to play with friends, but not so great in making friends in the first place. Additionally, individual persons are not "islands" - what players outside their group are doing, what standards they live by and what kind of ethic they

bring to the game greatly affects enjoyment of the former, or even their ability to properly socialize, access content and derive satisfaction.

"Real World" implications: they're no different from experiencing the same kind of trauma or group/individual abuse in "real life". Frankly, I don't see the distinction because there is none (I used to, in early period). Keeping up the false myth of our actions having less significance just because medium of communication changes from first person verbal, visual or physical to a pair of keyboard & a mouse is misguided. It leads to indifference and confusion, among identity issues. Grief of my friend caused by in-game incident is no different from grief caused by non-game incident. People are involved, they are abused and suffer. PEOPLE. With all due respect, it doesn't take a PhD to understand that.

2.c) What actions do you take (both in-game and in real life) in response to being grieved?

These questions are fairly open, and this one is mostly answered already, so a recap: I try to find a rational solution and either avoid conflict altogether, perform a damage control and not seek further hostilities, or grief back. I believe this answer stands true for everyone, the only difference being their awareness of it, and their pain thresholds, automatic & learned responses, the philosophy of dealing with people. I believe this question needs no further input based on what I've said earlier.

3.a) Autonomy

I don't tend to associate with people that refuse me access to particular content, or impose a certain way of playing it that is not in line with how I want to experience it. I also don't care much for gold or items, so I'm not pressured to perform regular farming activity or dungeon speedruns.

If I were dependant on these sources of in-game wealth, I'd be about as much pissed as I were in the first few years of playing MMOs, feeling less for being refused content and berated for not following a morally degenerate "norms". Happily for me, ends don't justify the means. It's the journey, not the destination.

3.b) Competence

I feel resentment for the griefer in question, and proceed to happily ignore him. If he really gets on my nerves or it's impossible for me to ignore him (e.g. I'm in dungeon party and rest of the group expects me to stay and play to my best), I make sure to point out that my enjoyment or success in the game is not dependant on his personal approval.

If for some reason conflict escalates and it's impossible to complete content OR I get kicked out from the party, I might be angry for a bit but I totally shrug it off the next day and I don't feel that my character is less capable or defunct.

3.c) Relatedness

This is a big one, lately I've been feeling less and less connected with people outside my most intimate social circles because I play irregularly and don't commit myself to guild life, in order to avoid discomfort of "having to commit" when more important matters of my education or family life take place. While I was still active in the guilds, however, rejection or hostility of some players within the group caused me great grief.

I don't have to like everyone, but there is a fine line no one should cross just because he's not in agreement with another player. Lack of social skills of other people and selfish attitude are major contributions to why I don't feel comfortable even in totally laid-back, casual guilds, if I can't commit and socialize on regular basis.

For these reasons I focus on individual persons rather than on communities, guilds, clans or societies. I never cared for the popular opinion or community as a whole, neither do I crave the kind of attention some players need in order to feel accepted, listened to, cared about and respected.

4.a) Would you agree with this and why? Or why not?

I believe there is no causation involved, merely correlation. I love literary and animated/cinema pieces on fantasy, ancient cultures, mental and spiritual matters. In games, I enjoy a good single-player RPG with deep, multi-faceted and branching story, based on character's origin, choices made in the adventure and unveiling events around them. In MMORPGs, when creating a character, I like to create a piece of art that resembles the idea I have for the character, and which fits the name I chose for it (that alone can take days to think of good name). I like my characters to have life and purpose, and great deal of customization definitely helps.

I may have thick skin, but others do not. Assault on their avatar can cause them grief, or feel like an attack on their person. Most of it would not be a problem if people addressed each other in online games like they would the same people in front of them, without the physical barriers of distance and space. Again, it's a deeper issue that probably warrants a separate research and some more thought given into it to avoid falling into biases and traps.

4.b) What types of customization have you applied to your avatar that you believe may incite griefers to target you?

I tend not to make characters that could be considered sexualised or somehow disruptive/abusive/provocative in their appearance. I can give a few examples on top of my head, however, of people getting flak daily for their aesthetic choices. I naturally (without any sort of pressure) make characters the way I envision them and don't get flak for it. Perhaps I'm in the happy minority.

5.a) Would you agree with these? Why or why not?

It is entirely possible that the inner drive of these persons for perfectionism and self-improvement, in certain circumstances, gets exploited by perverted logic and inner

workings of their social circles (assuming the said victims don't have the backbone to filter feedback based on its merits, and reject unsound suggestions). In other words, your willingness to learn and being open to criticism are just a new vulnerability for grievers to exploit - grievers, that will confuse the victim by presenting personal attacks as constructive criticism, and use that vulnerability for personal gain and co-dependence of their victims on them for future favours. Reminds me a bit of "Persecutor - Rescuer - Victim" triangle, parallels definitely can be made (that one also shows in very graphic way the process of moral degeneracy, victims turning persecutors when subjected with systemic abuse to get anything done in the game). Again, a whole research could be dedicated just to this question alone, I'm afraid.

5.b) Do you feel that being motivated by advancement and game mechanics are valuable to a victim of griefing? Why or why not?

Loaded question. Very well, here it goes then: being motivated by advancement and game mechanics is a personality trait valuable to any player in the game, even those not focused on game mastery or extrinsic (prestige) achievements. The problem is with naive, immature, misguided perfectionism, the juvenile drive to do anything better and faster, with no second thoughts to stop and think, or filter the feedback loop properly. Again, partly answered above.

6.a) Do you agree with the assessment of these actions as acts of griefing? Why or why not?

Yes, I agree, with all 15 of them. There are many more forms of griefing, but I believe I made that point obvious already by now.

6.b) Have you been subjected to any of these actions yourself? If so how did you react and feel afterwards?

- 1) Verbal Harassment
- 2) Ninja Looting
- 3) Corpse/Spawn Camping
- 4) Preying on New Players
- 5) Scamming
- 6) Team Disruption
- 7) Event Disruption

All of these forms, unfortunately including scamming as well. 2), 3), 4) and 5) will be answered with a certain kind of MMORPGs in mind, it won't apply to my current experiences.

What I experienced:

2) Anger. Frustration. Bashing poor keyboard. Not only most of these games encouraged this kind of behaviour, there was no alternative loot system in place for players in the same party (e.g. loot roll system, or tagging loot to players). It basically destroyed any kind of team spirit on PUG (pick-up) dungeon/map farming groups, made people even less likely to party up unless they had to and funneled everyone into joining a guild and following a very restrictive and elaborate system of reward/loot

distribution on guild runs, which almost universally benefitted the veteran players and guild master at the expense of newer players.

In Cabal there were guilds where it was considered "normal" for a guild member to donate in-game currency to guild crafter when asked and then run 40 dungeons for "free" paying the entry token and not claiming loot before coming out of probation period and being eligible for loot roll or guild contribution point system (exchange "points" for loot in the guild stash etc.). There are many similar horror stories from other MMOs. I'll just say it wasn't the most pleasant thing to deal with.

Setting people up against each other and promoting feats of Con Artists hurt the game and community more in the end than any kind of selfish pride or achievement to be gained in such predatory environment.

3) Good grief. Nothing I can write here can explain the frustration of being actively hunted for sport by would-be "elite players" killing everyone on the slightest offence, looting their corpse and denying access to maps and dungeons. Fun for the few, tragedy for the most.

4) I felt completely helpless and abused. I also had a few episodes of eventually doing the same to others helpless to stop me. I'm glad this misguided cycle of systemic abuse is not present in the game I play now, and people have to really go out of their own way to scam or cheat someone based on their lack of knowledge or apparent vulnerability.

5) Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me. I was fooled twice, and twice of own accord putting trust in the wrong people. I felt robbed of own time, effort, achievement. Something that I felt I intrinsically owned, was lost in a second of not looking. It caused me to have great distrust for other players in matters of fishy trading, gear swapping and similar practices, and I can't bring myself to trust a stranger regardless of the circumstances. Don't misunderstand me, however - it wasn't so much about what was lost in material fashion, but the confidence scam.

6) Depends on the circumstances. Half of the times this kind of disruption can be beneficial. If it's sole purpose is to destroy a team effort rather than seek alternative way to succeed, I'll likely have enough of a particular dungeon or instance for the whole day, and not want that person on the team again for some time.

7) I usually laugh these off, I can't recall a single incident of event being totally ruined by player interference.

7.a) Do you agree with the assessment of this actions not being an act of griefing? Why or why not?

This problem is practically gone from the MMORPG I play now (rewards are distributed differently and it doesn't pay off to sit in one place and kill mobs), so I'll just refer to experiences from the MMORPGs I used to play.

It pretty much IS an act of griefing, and systemic griefing at that. You're encouraged to claim a spot for yourself and/or kill the other player that is there, if you don't chances are you won't get loot. What you need loot for? To even play the game, from the

revolting costs of health and mana potions to repair costs of equipment to maintenance costs of charges/enchanted equipment, acquiring new skills, buying more powerful weapons and dungeon entrance tokens etc.

In another words, the game was a ZERO-SUM game - your profit, or even ability to play and quality of that experience was inversely proportional to the status and enjoyment of other players you competed with (and you competed with anyone, even own guild members on a dungeon run), based on the scarcity of resources (or, to be more precise, scarcity of resource-generating nodes/spots/instances). Now, it could be argued, since game's system is like that and encourages this kind of behavior to "win", then these are the rules of the game everyone abides by, and if you don't like it, you don't play the game.

The dilemma of this issue could be summed up in one sentence: "Might makes right". Agree? Disagree? If we assume that the only moral code of the game is what players are physically able to do, and that social interactions or rules are a hindrance if they stop a player from amassing most wealth, then I don't even know if I'd like to play such a game. The point is, all kind of griefing is actively encouraged under such a system, as long as it furthers one's goals and doesn't get him banned, including scamming, being disruptive and manipulative.

7.b) Have you been subjected to Mob Camping yourself? If so how did you react and feel afterwards?

While I still was subject to it, I was infuriated every time someone raided "my" spot and/or killed me in the process. At that point I had to fight back for it or be left in the gutter. This kind of childish competition had it's merits when I was much younger, but now I can't even be bothered with this kind of artificial conflict. I'd rather meet nice people and have a good time with them pursuing a common goal, than view nearly every stranger around me as some kind of asshole I need to deal with just to play the game. Not pleasant in the least, and mind-bogglingly dumb way of interacting with other people, as far as I'm concerned.

8. It was found in our analysis that all other actions (not listed in questions 6 and 7), were not heavily skewed towards either always or never being a form of griefing, by those often subjected to griefing. Do you agree with this, and can you give any examples?

If we talk about griefing in general (all forms), then it's all a matter of severity, audience and the context. Griefing is omnipresent, no need to search for it (be it "real" life or online communities).

As far as the forms specified for this question, hmmm, a few random guesses then.

Mob Camping: already talked on that one, previous questions.

Spamming: I guess people get used to it, and it's impossible to compete with your wares or guild message when you're swarmed by other users happily spamming the chat. One of those rules always present but rarely exercised, as far as spamming goes. I'd blame it first on poor game's infrastructure for communication, second by inability or

unwillingness to punish players for spam and third ... by players indifference to move a finger about it.

Kill Stealing: loot goes to the biggest asshole, and since you want loot ... oh well. If it's a problem in a particular game, it's because game was designed like that. Players are in a trap of either not playing, or playing the "game" by it's unwritten rules. Depending on the severity, it ranges from incidental to playful jabs and all-out harassment, but nobody will move a finger about it since that's how the game is played. Asshole takes all the spoils, why be nice if you get left behind?

Player Killing/Ganking: another unwritten rule of the game. The only lasting argument that works, is the argument of force. Killing is also good for sport, as long as you're not the game that is being hunted. While we could go into the philosophical underpinnings of this issue, for bigger chunk of MMORPGs grinding and gearing up while staving off competition from mob spots and ninja-looting dungeons has really only two purposes ... the first is to be ready for new batch of more powerful dungeons and monsters dropping better loot, the other is to use gained advantage against other players and show off in duels, battlegrounds, arenas. Quite often separate kind of resources is given to the victors, and PvP becomes another "endgame" allowing further character progression and prestige. Considering new players get ganked and abused while trying to get stronger, they consider it their right to exact the same punishment and hunt for sport, pleasure or competition other players when they're strong enough. And those already strong enough, well, it's not like they're asking us for permission to kill other people.

My opinion? I love PvP, under even odds. Standardised gear, arenas separated from the PvE game. Players shouldn't be forced to defend their lives just to kill mobs in the wilderness, unless they specifically bought a game for this kind of thrills. Sadly, I don't see most MMORPGs following such a trend - they install the PvE game, and then add griefing and ganking of this nature on top of it to satisfy the blood hounds at the expense of more peaceful players. Frankly, these games thrive on conflict, grief and tears.

Mob luring/training: players often do that purely by accident, and it's difficult to distinguish that is a single incident from organised griefing, until it's already too late. Lastly, the legendary "monster trains" in modern MMOs are much harder to pull off, if not hazardous to the luring person. As a form of griefing, it requires more technical sophistication and knowledge to make it work, the kind of ordeal not every player will want to go through. For these reasons, I believe it's a form of griefing, but for simple player convenience, and being generally a low-priority abuse, it's not widely recognised as such.

Blocking: I have no idea why it's not given a higher priority and recognised as griefing, because there is totally nothing to argue in favour of it.

Loopholes: A sad reality of MMORPGs. Bugs unfixed for ages, and the developer mentality of punishing players or ignoring offenders instead of working on a programming-level solution to the problem. There is also the peer pressure. Use the best profession and build, best items. Do the dungeon one way, not the other. Do it

fast, use bugs to make it easier or faster. Don't comply, and people won't want to play with you, because you delay their progress. This is yet another issue that warrants research of its own, there is likely nothing I can write here that you don't already know.

Role-Play Disruption: My personal experiences with roleplayers (the ones vocal about it in the chat and actively "RPing"), is that they can be far more disruptive to normal community (e.g. in a city hub where trading and recruitment takes place), then it is the other way around. A competent roleplayer should be able to turn out-of-character comments into an inside joke, and continue with his play. I've seen both sides of the argument get abusive towards one another or try to impose arbitrary (and apparently ridiculous) rules on what is allowed to say or do, and for these reasons I can imagine most people not seeing this as a problem.

Unless there is a dedicated RP server with strict admins policing how the players behave, talking of RP disruption is pointless, and if it's not pointless, it's already dealt with by game admins. Also worth noting: RP players fight among themselves and threaten with in-game reports over what kind of RP is allowed or not, or hijacking each others' events. At this point, it's better if community tries to policy itself and arrives with a common consensus. If it's not possible, then RP will only be a needless source of conflicts.

Followup to Initial Questions:

1. You state that you and your friend are "fairly burned by the generally hostile and anti-social design of most multiplayer games, and the kind of communities they breed". While I could make my own assumptions based on my own experiences, can you please describe this sentence about the design and communities?

A tough one, but I'll try my best.

First, two assumptions about multiplayer games, their business models and resulting player communities:

a) publisher, and by extension publisher-owned (or self-published) developer has to design a game and control the flow of new players with profit in mind first (during game's lifecycle), with fun and health of that community only as a second priority (and only when it happens to coincide with more profit during lifecycle, when offsetting the costs of such operation)

b) once a game is released, it's core community often dictates subsequent design of the game to keep them in, as the likelihood of original (and potentially toxic) playerbase being replaced by more friendly and social players is fairly improbable

Which in most cases **gives** us this: game is more concerned with player numbers, player concurrency/activity and various financial metrics (such as profit per player per year) regardless of the resulting community, than building a strong, unified community around base values and growing it.

The result? Quantity over quality. No unified game vision (subject to profit). Short-term considerations over long-term health of the game and it's players. A very chaotic, fragmented community, filled with selfish, anti-social incentives.

Examples of anti-social game design and resulting anti-social behaviour?

- pursuit of player-centric achievements at the expense of group's success in content, and subsequent game design that allows and encourages it (rather than a reward- and achievement-structure which encourages people to group, compete as a team and then reward everyone equally based on team's performance)

- game's reward structure making progress, access to new content and ability to compete with others impossible without pursuit of purely statistical (stats, gold, reputation points) achievements and goals - the pace of new gear tiers, amount of work needed can and will be designed to keep **players** playing everyday grinding for coin and levels, in most cases, at the expense of personal life and in-game social activities

- a vain attempt at luring every possible kind of player there exists, instead of sticking to a unified game vision and **providing** best gameplay to carefully chosen target audience (includes: breaking pre-launch design principles and promises made to players, a very chaotic and short-sighted post-launch game development & maintenance, lack of real content development which is instead replaced by adding new gear tiers and levels, which in and of themselves add very little to the game, but create a pressure to sink another thousand hours into the game just to keep up with friends and guildmates, to be able to access the same content as they do and socialise)

There are more, but I'm outlining the idea. When a game puts arbitrary goals above it's players and resulting community, there can be only one result. And for developers/publishers choice is always two-fold: build a community around singular game design and vision that will last and bring profit, or go for more profit and screw over players themselves.

Summarising, me and my friend **are** burned by developers which can't and don't want to strike a healthy compromise between supporting it's players **with content** and providing **gameplay hours (regardless of actual content added)** for them, **while** pleasing the shareholders which couldn't care less about anything that isn't written in their financial report and followed by a metric. No single developer or publisher is at fault, because whole game industry is sick and subject to government regulation in order to better protect the customers from exploitation (including shady, "wild-west" style microtransactions and exploitative business models, which would normally fall under banned forms of gambling if not for the fact that law hasn't caught up yet to the industry), even if it means endangering the artistic freedom to design a game and it's business model as one pleases.

2. Are you willing to describe the Lineage 2 griefing episode you mentioned? I understand if you decide to withhold this.

Long story shory, my friend played lineage 2 for quite some time and made "friends" there, joined a guild, all that stuff to keep her in game even when she wanted to quit. But for all that time, she wouldn't dare to confess she was a woman, because of apparent double-standards of behaviour and discrimination of female gamers. One moment she gave in to a person she considered trustworthy, only to be rejected and later treated (both privately and in front of others) as "chick", "gurl", "baby", instead of as a friend. Friendlist, guild, other randomly-met players - wherever she went, females kept quiet and pretended to be men, while men had good fun ridiculing and shaming her. Games are pretty small worlds and news get around fast. Sufficient to say, when she moved to Guild Wars and later Guild Wars 2 with me (we still play both games), I was among the first people who allowed her to feel respected for who she is, not what others would like her to be.

For now, MMOs give a strong vibe of boys-only club, and the different treatment avoved female players get is not an opinion but a fact. Lately it's been getting worse, because "required" voice communication during dungeon runs, pvp matches and guild activities has become the norm, unlike 10 or 15 years ago when only chosen communities and guilds decided to pursue it. And while there are examples of mature players, communities and guilds, the big picture is still stained by blood of the innocent women - and it shames me to admit it greatly, myself being a man, even if it was among the first things I've noticed while playing MMOs, and multiplayer games in general.

3. After mentioning Guild Wars 2, you describe that developers are "too afraid to deviate from the norm", and "even if the system clearly favors one group only, and puts it on pedestal for everyone to see." Can you explain what you mean by this?

Follow-up from question 1, then.

Guild Wars 2 broke the promises it has laid in it's design manifesto, as well as pre-launch interviews. In fact, it can hardly be considered a sequel in it's content, basic gameplay and design philosophy, not to mention the resulting business model (or should I say everything else resulted from business model? I won't get into this now).

Specifically:

- character design, monster design, story design (writing, setting, background, mood, overall story arc, gameplay considerations) -> it's juvenile and immature compared to it's predecessor (it's the first game in the series where I don't actually read anything or research game lore, on top of struggling for hours on how to make my character look without falling into some barbie or bieber cliché)

- players were promised leveling experience of one level per hour up to level 80, and to be fully decked out in statistically-best gear by level 80 just by playing the game - obviously it was a lie, because game shipped with another tier of gear that required anywhere between a week to a month to acquire, and on top of it november update last year introduced yet another tier which requires anywhere between 2-3 months to half a

year to get (when you consider the in-game gold, materials necessary to level up-crafting, daily/time-gated "achievements/resources", multiple weapons - and we didn't even get to various stat combinations, because right now people pursuing last tier have very little to no build flexibility without grinding for months to have another character build decked out with proper items), logging daily for many hours (and why is this important? progression was supposed to be horizontal, with unlocking new costumes, weapon and armour skins, minipets, skills and traits that differ by their function but not by their power level)

- game continues to lock most aesthetic rewards from updates behind a grinding treadmill of lasting-2-weeks-only achievements, cash shop items which give random chance of getting a ticket (which makes you eligible for the reward) and actively encourages players with more healthy schedule to buy in-game gold with dollars, before the rewards forever disappear and are no longer available, or are available for 5 times the standard price with cash shop tickets (legal, developer-supporter selling of gold? now that's one step further toward total moral apathy in this industry)

So why do I still play this game? Guild Wars 1 is largely deserted by it's players, because it's developer decided not to support and grow it's community **the** moment they set their sights on developing Guild Wars 2 in total secrecy, and that was back in 2007 when game was supposed to be an advanced expansion to original game allowing new content to be made, not a total spin shitting on the original game's principles and audience. Guild Wars 2, while with thousands of flaws, got my money once - for a box. As long as my friends reside here, and there is content I can do without incessant pressure to fork dollars or grind daily for pointless achievements, I will stay. And I kid you not, it's a deeply flawed game with rare glimpses of design brilliance, but still better than most other MMOs I've played to date (with exception of original Guild Wars, as well as Planetside 2 which is not exactly your standard MMO but manages to have a very healthy f2p business model, and at least in my opinion, good customer relations and open game development policy).

4. In regards to avatar customisation inciting griefers, you state that you can give a few examples off the top of your head "of people getting flak daily for their aesthetic choices" - Can you provide these examples?

Usually, it's any silly, mismatched or over-sexualised armour combination. It gets worse when whole categories of players are pigeon-holed into a particular design (prime offenders: blocky/super-sized/"intellectually deficient" male warriors, female casters, gender-locked classes/professions etc.), and then basically made a butt of a joke in public and in parties because of their gameplay choice (want to play a mage? cool ... now just wear this, erhm, "outfit" and flash the guests with well-rounded breasts). It's not a problem with specific MMOs, but the art direction in MMOs (and MMORPGs) in general. Choice of a fetish, should you fancy that, is good. Being fetishised just because of a gender, class, profession or armour type choice, is not funny at all. Player response in these incidents is obvious, anything that is considered "odd" or "funny" quickly turns into a popular insult, worse even, "socially-acceptable" insult making the stigma all that worse.

5. Lastly, Do you have anything else to share that may be beneficial to this study titled "Cause, Magnitude and Implications of Griefing in MMORPGs"?

Nothing in particular, besides good luck in your endeavours. Maybe 30 years from now, we'll get to support more responsible game developers and publishers, and take part in mature communities built on principles. Right now, it's profit-oriented chaos, with very little regulation, which unfortunately, doesn't seem to encourage deviating from the "norm", free-form experimentation and innovation of game design (instead, predatory business models and game design principles cannibalise more friendly game design, pushing them out of the market - and last I checked, no developer wants to be unemployed and homeless).

Sometimes less is more, and in this case, I believe, less chaos and more principles are needed. Playing MMOs needs to stop feeling like a job, a gambling machine and a dollar betting contest - and if there are still such games, they need to clearly define their audience and be upfront about their gameplay and business models, and stop luring the unsuspecting players to compromise them completely and rob of dignity just to make a few dollars more. This exploitation needs to stop. Best of luck.

H.1.5 Griefed (Survey ID 1001)

You have identified yourself as a MMORPG player that is subjected to griefing on a regular basis while playing MMORPGs.

- a) **How long had you played MMORPGs before you were first subjected to griefing and how long have you played MMORPGs in total?**
- b) **What was your reaction to it at the time?**
- c) **How would you react today if the same thing happened?**

I am wondering now if I have gotten the term mixed up. I have been subjected to a lot of ridicule online, though every now and then I suppose attempts at griefing were made. It happens in PvP and PvE environments. I suppose when I said I was subjected to it, I have had it thrown at me often, but I always find a way around it. MMO's are full of loopholes and tricks - some thinking outside the box will often outsmart a griefer any day. I don't know how long it took till I experienced it - that would just be random to be honest. But I probably experienced it in games before MMORPG's. My reaction at the time is often spite and anger, that is just how I get when I feel someone is trying to get an upper hand on me. It helps drive my creative thinking in game though too. How do I react today? Same way, just try to focus on how to have the upper hand in a situation myself.

For example, people claim in the MMO Rift, you can be spawn camped in PvP. Which some consider griefing (even though Trion's ToS for rules sake claims you 'cannot grief the opposite faction in pvp'). While some take it over and over and get angry, many don't realize if you log in and out, you get an immunity buff, and can move to a safe

spot and get ready again. Small example but, I have had it thrown my way but I don't think it has ever ultimately been pinned on me outside of verbal things. MMORPG's are build on countering other classes and effects - a smart player can counter a grief quite often somehow.

Being subjected to griefing:

- a) **Do you have any ideas what has incited the griefer to target you? If so, what?**
- b) **What type of griefing causes the most impact upon you and how does it affect your character, and yourself in the real world? Can you give any examples?**
- c) **What actions do you take (both in-game and in real life) in response to being grieved?**

Probably a sense of retaliation has incited someone to target me. But then again, I just could come up with ideas. I really have no clue or real idea of why people have done some things. When I was younger and my father passed away - involved in the gaming community I was in - I had people try to ridicule me on game servers about that happening. I do not know what drives this. Maybe I did something to them in the past I forgot? Maybe I am the proximate target for their anger to be taken out on?

I would say the kind that has the most impact is obviously the personal level stuff. We can feel fine when we walk away from the computer but, if personal level things I imagine for most would have a greater impact than "you suck at your class" type crap.

In real life, I am prescribed Valium and take one. Honestly, I just try to let it go in real life. In game, I like to recall a quote from my days playing the old FPS Quake series. There was always a trash talker abound and I was often told I should "let your guns do the talking". It basically means - get back at a griefer in the very context it is taking place in. Nothing pays back like a silently performed triumph over them through the game they are attempting to bother you in.

Describe how you feel in relation to your need for _____ after being subjected to griefing as opposed to before.

- a) **Autonomy.** Obviously I lose some self control because I let someone get the best of me. Although I could question if I get some sort of enjoyment or thrill out of payback, because obviously I make the choice to. Perhaps I feel like if I can make an even pay back, the attempt is worth it.
- b) **Competence.** I feel a degree of redemption for this, but mostly because I know when I allow actions to happen to be and get too much an upperhand, it is part in my error and sloppy gameplay.
- c) **Relatedness.** Everyone likes a friend to talk to after someone has been mean. I guess it is natural to gravitate towards your friends. But...I know who likes me

typically and who doesn't. I feel the same really about this I believe. Or don't think about it in depth.

During our study, we have noted that those subjected to grief play in general rated customization of their avatar as one of the highest motivational factors to play MMORPGs.

- a) **Would you agree with this and why? Or why not?**
- b) **What types of customization have you applied to your avatar that you believe may incite griefers to target you?**

Someone once told me "MMO's are all about having what other people don't". I think this is what drives customization. An item feels cool to have, if everyone has it, it isn't that cool. Customization isn't far from real life. Like anyone would think it is awesome if the new out-fit they bought over the weekend and hair-do they did (trivial stuff) everyone copied. It just takes the thrill out of a style I think for many. So I agree, customization is a high motivating factor in MMOs. However, I don't think this is a strong motivator for griefing. Unless you are talking about blatant names and things meant to incite. Like naming in game pets and such things. But that is pretty minor. I wouldn't say customization has much effect on griefing. It doesn't register in my mind as related at least.

During our study, we have noted that those subjected to grief play in general rated character advancement and learning the game mechanics as two very high motivational factors.

- a) **Would you agree with these? Why or why not?**
- b) **Do you feel that being motivated by advancement and game mechanics are valuable to a victim of griefing? Why or why not?**

Of course I agree with this. It is the bread and butter of an MMO. Empowering your toon and learning how to play. Learning goes hand in hand with **any** activity. Gaming wouldn't be excluded. From the moment you start an MMO, you do a quest that rewards a new item and you hit level 2. It is built on the concept of power progression.

I think being motivated by these things makes you an easier victim to griefing. The guy at the basketball court who really doesn't care about the game one bit, and really couldn't care to learn it either - but just prefers tossing some shots. They are not going to take it as personal if someone says they are horrible and beats them 1 on 1. The person who is trying to learn and become better, will take it more personal. Verbal comments can defy ones personal aspirations (like learning and becoming better). So, I think people who are motivated by it, just end up in the same crowd, but on the same token, if it motivates you, you are more vulnerable probably to griefing.

In general, those that were often subjected to griefing considered the 7 actions below (of the 15 proposed actions) as heavily skewed towards always being a form of griefing:

- 1) Verbal Harassment**
- 2) Ninja Looting**
- 3) Corpse/Spawn Camping**
- 4) Preying on New Players**
- 5) Scamming**
- 6) Team Disruption**
- 7) Event Disruption**

a) Do you agree with the assessment of these actions as acts of griefing? Why or why not?

1a. Of course.

2a. It's rude, but hard to be directed griefing because there are often many involved. It is just being a jerk in general.

3a. Yes, but this is also very avoidable often. I don't often sympathize with people who get this form of griefing, because it is not hard to avoid.

4a. yes

5a. Yes

6a. Yes

7a. If you are on a PvP server, this is the point of the server. So the line blurs at times. Two factions fighting is the definition of an event disruption.

b) Have you been subjected to any of these actions yourself? If so how did you react and feel afterwards?

1a. Yes. Honestly hurt.

2a. Yes. Just don't group with said person again. Loot isn't worth being upset over, you can always get it again.

3a. I know a ways around it, so attempted, but no.

4a. Not really.

5a. Not personally.

6a. Yes. Just sigh and shake my head. Not much I can do. Sometime a jerk is abound.

7a. Yes. Roll with the punches.

In general, those that were often subjected to griefing only considered one action (of the 15 proposed actions) as skewed towards not being a form of griefing, this was Mob Camping:

a) Do you agree with the assessment of this actions not being an act of griefing? Why or why not?

b) Have you been subjected to Mob Camping yourself? If so how did you react and feel afterwards?

Mob camping is needed sometimes and there is nothing against it. I competed in some very high end raiding where the best loot in the game was based around camping mobs. They were contested raid mobs of the highest game difficulty. You killed them if you had a guildie camping 10+ spots around the world and a guild ready to respond to a call list even if it is 4am, and wake up and kill the mob. I suppose the line drawn would be it is griefing depending on the balance of how much the camper needs the mob and how trivial the meaning of the mob is.

Blocking a guild from a mob that opens access to a progressive raid zone - that is playing the game with no gloves on. Blocking a solo dude from a mob that gives a simple quest update for a thing trivial by game standards just to take up his time while you gain nothing in the large scheme - ya that is sort of griefing. I'd have to call it by ear.

I've been subjected to mob camping, sometimes in cases where the mob had equal value to me and someone else. I don't get mad, I get even. I learn the timer of the mob, get ready for it, and have my trigger finger ready to get the mob I am trying to kill. I tend not to back down easily. If someone else can do it, there is no reason I can't hit the buttons and do it too. If I really want a mob, I can often get it. Or just do something else if a spot is hot and everyone is all over a mob.

It was found in our analysis that all other actions (not listed in questions 6 and 7), were not heavily skewed towards either always or never being a form of griefing, by those often subjected to griefing. Do you agree with this, and can you give any examples?

The lines blurs because there is no ultimate truth and people will try to refer to a book for the moral compass. Like player ganking. Often times in an MMO's terms of service/EULA, ganking is not a form of griefing. It is the way the game goes, and if a class has stealth and high burst damage opening up - people walking around on a pvp server are subject to attacks by such a class. But, there are landslide targets people can find to gank. Easy kills that take no effort. So yes, this can go either way. If you keep ganking an equal geared/skilled players - well, that is part of video games. Not everyone can win a game/match. If you have a decent opportunity to fight back and can't triumph, you have to accept that as part of gaming. You can't be the best at everything.

I would agree that most the other ones cannot be undisputedly labeled as either griefing or not. It depends on the situation.

H.1.6 Griefed (Survey ID 1126)

You have identified yourself as a MMORPG player that is subjected to griefing on a regular basis while playing MMORPGs.

- a) **How long had you played MMORPGs before you were first subjected to griefing and how long have you played MMORPGs in total?** If I consider the first MMORPG that I played to be Tradewars, a text-based, bulletin board system (bbs) game I began playing in 1990, I would say it was approximately 10 years before I was first remarkably and memorably “griefed”; I have played MMORPGs for 23 years, in that case. If BBS system games are not included, and the playerbase were required to be 1,000 players or more online at once, the total would be 15 years. If the total players was required to be 10,000 or more, the total would be 13 years.
- b) **What was your reaction to it at the time?** I was absolutely in shock. As far as I knew, players were not able to kill other players in the game in which I was first griefed.
- c) **How would you react today if the same thing happened?** Revenge. Gamemasters virtually never care when players are griefed.

Being subjected to griefing:

- a) **Do you have any ideas what has incited the griefer to target you? If so, what?** In retrospect, I *know* that griefers target those who protest and complain about their activities the loudest. At the time it first happened, it was actually a trap intended for anyone who came into the area and did affect others before and after it affected me.
- b) **What type of griefing causes the most impact upon you and how does it affect your character, and yourself in the real world? Can you give any examples?** The worst type of griefing is that which causes a loss of in-game items, in-game currency, or the wasting of a long period of time. For example, some games cause damage to items that can not be repaired (or can not be repaired indefinitely); when a player dies, this damage to items is significant, so to have a player intentionally causing other player's deaths has the utmost impact. When games take large amounts of time to acquire certain items, which are then broken by other players who prefer griefing over “playing nice” with others, it is extremely frustrating and quickly turns me off to a game. Even repeatedly killing other players, when there are no item losses has the same effect on me. Aion is a prime example of this. At level 18, my character was repeatedly killed by level 50 characters. This caused me to very quickly quit the game, even though I liked everything else about the game very, very much.
- c) **What actions do you take (both in-game and in real life) in response to being griefed?** In-game, I will usually protest the griefing, usually by attempting to contact a gamemaster, who usually does not respond with any discernible rapidity, then by telling (not asking – part of the problem? Perhaps...) the griefer to stop. In some cases, I move to other areas of the game. In some of those cases, the

griever will follow me and continue. In a worst case scenario, I log out, wait a while, and log back in. If the griever is still there (which has happened on several occasions), I will log onto a different character entirely for a much longer period of time and do something completely different. If I run into the griever again, or I can't shake the griever, I will quit playing the game for the day. In real life, I seldom do anything related to the griever, but I will remain mad about it when I'm not able to continue my playing.

Describe how you feel in relation to your need for _____ after being subjected to grieving as opposed to before.

- a) **Autonomy.** Completely helpless – I don't feel I am in control of absolutely anything in the game that I'm playing. The griever has all the power. It is extremely rare to see an iron-handed gamemaster take a stand and do anything exceptional and permanent to stop grievers.
- b) **Competence.** Unaffected – I know that if the griever were gone, I would go back to my normal level of play.
- c) **Relatedness.** Completely outcast – Because I don't (usually ever) grief, and because I see so many other people around me laughing and otherwise encouraging grieving, I feel as if I don't belong in the game and I am much more capable of quitting playing the game, no matter how much I like any specific aspects of it. (i.e., I loved flying in Aion, but no matter how much I loved that, being killed repeatedly by other players ruined the game for me, and I was easily able to stop playing it.)

During our study, we have noted that those subjected to grief play in general rated customization of their avatar as one of the highest motivational factors to play MMORPGs.

- a) **Would you agree with this and why? Or why not?** As a roleplayer, I get pretty attached to my characters. I use the same names, create the same types of characters, in virtually every MMORPG. These characters are “me”, online. And I don't like games where everyone (“me”) looks like everyone else. In games where I am not even allowed to choose my own character names, which is the basest form of customization, this effect is amplified by a tenfold at the least.
- b) **What types of customization have you applied to your avatar that you believe may incite grievers to target you?** I've never actually thought this was a factor, but I could entertain the notion that having a roleplaying character name (as opposed to calling my character BrittanySpears, xXsuperdogXx, iamatoaster, idoyourmom, or the like) could make me a target for non-roleplayers who, from experience, seem to have quite a taste for grieving in roleplaying games. Appearance-wise, I could not name an issue that would make my characters attractive to grievers.

During our study, we have noted that those subjected to grief play in general rated character advancement and learning the game mechanics as two very high motivational factors.

- a) **Would you agree with these? Why or why not?** Personally, I have a strong belief in players requiring a vast multitude of forms of advancement in games because their real world lives are (often grossly) unsatisfactory and unfulfilling. In the real world, they are not recognized at work, at home, in school, or within their families for achievements they have accomplished, and thus turn to MMORPGs for appreciation, acceptance, and success. I would also add that this lack of real-world success could be only in their own mind.
- b) **Do you feel that being motivated by advancement and game mechanics are valuable to a victim of griefing? Why or why not?** I don't believe so. When I'm being griefed, the only thing that concerns me is that it stops, permanently.

In general, those that were often subjected to griefing considered the 7 actions below (of the 15 proposed actions) as heavily skewed towards always being a form of griefing:

- a) **Do you agree with the assessment of these actions as acts of griefing? Why or why not?** Absolutely.
- b) **Have you been subjected to any of these actions yourself? If so how did you react and feel afterwards?**
- 1) **Verbal Harassment** - On a regular basis. Typically, these people get added to my ignore list.
 - 2) **Ninja Looting** – Not very often, but these players get blacklisted from attending my events and groups in the future. (I keep a list including name, date, time, event, and any guild they are associated with.)
 - 3) **Corpse/Spawn Camping** – Not very often, most games nowadays have moved away from this mechanic.
 - 4) **Preying on New Players** – On a regular basis. When I ask which key is used to open a specific window in a game, I will almost always get an answer of “alt-f4” (which terminates most software). These players also get added to my ignore list rather quickly.
 - 5) **Scamming** – I am typically too shrewd to be caught by a scam of any sort, in-game or in real life. In-game, I take screenshots of chat windows and trades to confirm that trades were completed and I didn't steal anyone's items.
 - 6) **Team Disruption** – On a regular basis. Players appear to be too egotistical or too self-centered to work as a team, especially and particularly in pvp situations.
 - 7) **Event Disruption** – On a regular basis. Roleplaying events are regularly disrupted by players who know nothing about roleplaying, don't care to learn about roleplaying, and make fun of people who are roleplaying. (For more

information on roleplaying in regards to MMORPGs, please read my “[Guide] Developing Your Character: A Guide To Roleplaying”.)

In general, those that were often subjected to griefing only considered one action (of the 15 proposed actions) as skewed towards not being a form of griefing, this was Mob Camping:

- a) **Do you agree with the assessment of this actions not being an act of griefing? Why or why not?** I am both for and against the idea of Mob Camping being a form of griefing. On one hand, if the mob (mobile, monster) is required for a quest, and someone is killing it over and over so no one else gets credit – yes, this is griefing to me. If the monsters is for a quest, and the killer is asked or shown a need to kill it for a quest – and the killer allows it to be killed by the other party – this is not griefing. If the monster is completely unrelated to any quests, or the killer is not asked – and would allow – another to kill the monster, this is not griefing to me.
- b) **Have you been subjected to Mob Camping yourself? If so how did you react and feel afterwards?** This has happened so infrequently in all of my time that I hardly remember it, but every incident like this is handled the same way, now that we can record videos of games and sent those videos semi-directly to the gamemasters. The most recent case was actually a person running around shearing all 5 of the sheep in one area of a browser-based game in which I was a beta tester. When asked, he didn't stop. He didn't even acknowledge my existence. I gave him 2 minutes to acknowledge me, then I began recording a video of his activities and of my asking him three times (2 minutes between each question) to respond or he would be reported for “botting”, and when he still failed to respond (another 2 minutes) that video was forwarded to the gamemasters (who I fully expect did nothing about/to him). (The 2-minute rule came from a previous game where my character was charged with verifying and punishing cheaters who played the game without being at their computers.)

It was found in our analysis that all other actions (not listed in questions 6 and 7), were not heavily skewed towards either always or never being a form of griefing, by those often subjected to griefing. Do you agree with this, and can you give any examples? In all honesty, I would have to be presented with a list to determine if I could agree with a claim that all other actions were not heavily skewed towards either always or never being a form of griefing. There is so much that goes on in an MMORPG that I can't immediately remember everything that has, could, or will happen.

One thing that I know for certain – MMORPG players are growing more and more selfish, self-centered, egotistical, greedy, and malignant as time goes by. To find a kindred soul that is truly and genuinely generous, altruistic, and devoted to helping others in a game without being sarcastic, rude, crude, or just flat-out mean is virtually unheard of by me in the past 5-6 years (minimum). Best wishes with your research. I would love to be of further assistance, if you so desire.

“Stormbow” virtually everywhere

H.2 Griever Transcripts

H.2.1 Griever (Survey ID 22)

You have identified yourself as a MMORPG player that performs acts of grieving on a regular basis while playing MMORPGs.

- a) **How long had you played MMORPGs before you began grieving and how long have you played MMORPGs in total?** Less than a year and over ten years.
- b) **What was the reason that you began grieving?** Entertainment.
- c) **Why do you continue to grief today?** Entertainment.

The act of grieving:

- a) **How do you select who you will perform grieving upon?** Anyone who comes in contact with my avatar's who interrupts my play.
- b) **What type of grieving do you enjoy the most and why? Can you give an example?** Area control. Go to an area and take it over and deny entry of other players through use of PvP or eliminating the ability to access mobs of allies by tagging or resetting. An example would be in themepark mmos like WoW kill all players flying into a site and kill flight master then camp the corpses and force all players of enemy faction to leave or if allies mind control their mobs so they become friendly and unkillable denying them the kill or resetting them by taking agro and having them regain full health. This is fun because their objective is compromised by my actions and their inability to alter it the longer they try adds to the entertainment value.
- c) **Do you grief by yourself, in a group, or both? What do you prefer and why?** Both. I prefer solo, but sometimes it is necessary to have a group as most mmos attrition exists.

Describe how you feel in relation to your need for _____ after performing grieving as opposed to before.

- a) **Autonomy.** Less than before.
- b) **Competence.** It can be additive so increased.
- c) **Relatedness.** Less than before.

During our study, we have noted that those that perform grieving in general rated competition as the highest motivational factor to play MMORPGs.

- a) **Would you agree with this and why?** I think this is a good motivational factor as luring someone else is always fun no matter what the situation friend or foe. Being king of the kill always strong motivation even if others consider it griefing.

During our study, we have noted that females that perform griefing rated role-playing as a motivational factor to play MMORPGs much higher than the male counterparts and all victims of griefing.

- a) **Does the role-playing aspect factor in to *your* motivation to play MMORPGs? Why or why not?** Yes. RPing is a strong motivation as lets me play a character of my own design and many RPer's will not ignore you as long as you stay ICCLy so in a sense it can be fun finding masochists and tormenting them in RP and just general throwing a monkey wrench into peoples sets and watching them try to react to my trolling. Corpse camping may be fun but short-lived and RP griefing generally yields a much longer life and therefore entertainment.
- b) **Can you provide some detail to whether you "role-play" an evil character or not?** Generally I RP evil characters, mainly because most people don't and its fun making people hurt ICly preferably after befriending and if they are OOCly its because they can't handle it ICCLy and probably masochists in denial.

In general, those that often performed griefing considered the 3 actions below (of the 15 proposed actions) as heavily skewed towards always being a form of griefing:

- 1) **Corpse/Spawn Camping**
- 2) **Ninja Looting**
- 3) **Scamming**

- a) **Do you agree with the assessment of these actions as acts of griefing? Why or why not?** Pretty much. All those things can be fun to do even if risk getting banned sometimes.
- b) **Have you performed any of these actions yourself? If so what do you feel you have gained and how do you feel afterwards?** I have done all of those listed. I have gained entertainment and even if banned it doesn't matter as can just make new account.

In general, those that often performed griefing only considered one action (of the 15 proposed actions) as skewed towards not being a form of griefing, this was Mob Camping.

- a) **Do you agree with the assessment of this actions not being an act of griefing? Why or why not?** If they don't let anyone else get the mob then it is griefing, but solely camping a mob for personal gain and not restricting others probably not.
- b) **Have you performed Mob Camping yourself? If so what do you feel you have gained and how do you feel afterwards?** Generally its not fun to camp a mob, its

boring. Its fun to camp a mob someone else needs then denying them it and making them leave is fun.

It was found in our analysis that all other actions (not listed in questions 6), according to self-identified griefing performers, were only sometimes to almost never a form of griefing. Do you agree with this, and can you give any examples? Many of those items on the list can be mitigated very easily by players so the hindrance they cause is not much. Most mmo developers have learned not to give to much freedom to players so only games like Darkfall or many f2p games where accounts can be made easily incase of being banned you can get the most out of griefing currently.

Verbal Harassment, RP/Event, spamming players can put you on ignore.

Kill stealing many games have many mobs spawning phasing or not first to tag but most damage or share loot between anyone who damages mob.

Ninja looting by greed/need rolls and not ffa looting

H.2.2 Griefer (Survey ID 133)

You have identified yourself as a MMORPG player that performs acts of griefing on a regular basis while playing MMORPGs.

- a) **How long had you played MMORPGs before you began griefing and how long have you played MMORPGs in total?** I've played MMORPGs over 9 years total. I can tell that I've started griefing just about when I gain an overall understanding of the game's mechanics and the community.(It has happened this way in different MMORPGs. Let's say, in about 2-3 months)
- b) **What was the reason that you began griefing?** I've started doing this quite a long time ago, can not point out a specific reason for this. But I remember the frustration I had, when I was playing Ultima-Online years ago, harsh, not casual-friendly mechanics & people. Probably it drove me in doing such acts in today's games. Which are much more casual player-friendly, which causes players to be less vigilant against such acts in my opinion. (It's more easy scamming today's players)
- c) **Why do you continue to grief today?** The specific reasons changed with each game. Yet can say that "Gaining with less effort" or.. more precisely; even if it takes effort, the feeling of outsmarting somebody else.

The act of griefing:

- a) **How do you select who you will perform griefing upon?** Depends of the method of griefing, can be totally random, or after spending some in-game time with the player &decide it as a possible-target.
- b) **What type of griefing do you enjoy the most and why? Can you give an example?** My recent favourite way is to scam players' money by gambling games.

In game /Roll mechanic, that generates a random number from 1-100 makes it possible. example: 500Golds minimum bet! Roll 65+ and double your money, roll 100 and get 5x ! The scam starts by the target guy, placing his money in Trade-panel . Even if he wins one ore two times, I returned the money, and gained somewhat of trust. Yet as the bet increase, they eventually lose. And even if they keep winning, I just don't return their money

- c) **Do you grieve by yourself, in a group, or both? What do you prefer and why?**
Again, depends on the type of grieving. Sometimes I need the help of other people (usually IRL friends) for the act. I can not prefer from one or the other, but as the people count increase, so does the fun-factor. :)

Describe how you feel in relation to your need for _____ after performing grieving as opposed to before. Let me use a scale between 0-10 to describe how satisfied I feel about these, after involving in grieving.

- a) **Autonomy.** 7
b) **Competence.** 8
c) **Relatedness.** 1

During our study, we have noted that those that perform grieving in general rated competition as the highest motivational factor to play MMORPGs.

- a) **Would you agree with this and why?** I can not totally agree on the idea that it's the main motivation factor for me to play a MMORPG. I care about the lore, create a fan-fiction background story for my character, care about the Pvp/Pve elements , more than just grieving. Yet it's important for me anyways.

During our study, we have noted that females that perform grieving rated role-playing as a motivational factor to play MMORPGs much higher than the male counterparts and all victims of grieving.

- a) **Does the role-playing aspect factor in to *your* motivation to play MMORPGs? Why or why not?** As explained on 4.a , yes it does for me too
b) **Can you provide some detail to whether you "role-play" an evil character or not?** I'd define it as a pragmatist character, not evil, who does whatever needs to be done for his/her benefit. Can blend grieving with this characteristic of the hero this way

In general, those that often performed grieving considered the 3 actions below (of the 15 proposed actions) as heavily skewed towards always being a form of grieving:

- 1) **Corpse/Spawn Camping**
- 2) **Ninja Looting**

3) Scamming

- a) **Do you agree with the assessment of these actions as acts of griefing? Why or why not?** I strongly disagree with the classification of these acts as griefing. The victim of these acts should not have put himself/herself in this situation. If the game allows this, it can be done. That's what I think. Ninja Looting and Scamming especially, the person who does these, can not be held responsible as griefing. These, are actually what a rogue, or evil character would do in a tabletop RPG game.
- b) **Have you performed any of these actions yourself? If so what do you feel you have gained and how do you feel afterwards?** Yes, I have performed all 3 of the above actions myself and felt satisfied and found it hilarious how easy to deceive many players out there.

In general, those that often performed griefing only considered one action (of the 15 proposed actions) as skewed towards not being a form of griefing, this was Mob Camping.

- a) **Do you agree with the assessment of these actions not being an act of griefing? Why or why not?** I value competition in a MMORPG, otherwise would focus on single-player games. If someone is strong enough to dominate mob-spawn points, it's his right to do so. Why not get better and compete with the so-called griefer? But people tend to whine about how broken the game is. Even the reason the topic of "griefing" is discussed so much nowadays is the increase in casual-players in MMORPGs. They give up easier, and demand a solution from the developers, which end up with games being "Retard-friendly" (excuse me for informal language)

It was found in our analysis that all other actions (not listed in questions 6), according to self-identified griefing performers, were only sometimes to almost never a form of griefing. Do you agree with this, and can you give any examples? Though I've performed it, Exploiting loopholes can be counted as a form of griefing, and it should be reported to the developers, because it's not something intentionally put in the game. For me, all other methods to gain whatever you need in the game, by understanding the design & mechanics of the game as it's put in front of you, is legit.

H.2.3 Griefer (Survey ID 229)

You have identified yourself as a MMORPG player that performs acts of griefing on a regular basis while playing MMORPGs.

- a) **How long had you played MMORPGs before you began griefing and how long have you played MMORPGs in total?** I have been playing MMORPG's for over 10 years now, I started griefing since open world PvP was introduced into MMO's.
- b) **What was the reason that you began griefing?** The pleasure of knowing you are affecting someone else's gameplay.

- c) **Why do you continue to grief today?** Same reason, its just fun to mess with people.

The act of grieving:

- a) **How do you select who you will perform grieving upon?** Random most times, unless someone provokes me or pisses me off then I target them.
- b) **What type of grieving do you enjoy the most and why? Can you give an example?** PvP usually, killing people is the most fun, sometimes in some games you can do things like drive cars into people, or block their objectives.
- c) **Do you grief by yourself, in a group, or both? What do you prefer and why?** On occasion I will grief with a group, but most times I just do it by myself. Its easier to do it alone then to try and form a group.

During our study, we have noted that those that perform grieving in general rated competition as the highest motivational factor to play MMORPGs.

- a) **Would you agree with this and why?** Competition, and skill, are large factors for me in playing games, but not in grieving, you can't prove that you are skilled by killing or grieving players who stand no chance at fighting you, its more of a power thing, making the other player feel helpless against you.

During our study, we have noted that females that perform grieving rated role-playing as a motivational factor to play MMORPGs much higher than the male counterparts and all victims of grieving.

- a) **Does the role-playing aspect factor in to your motivation to play MMORPGs? Why or why not?** I rarely if ever roleplay in MMO's, and when I do, its not the kind of role-playing that involves me killing someone or grieving them.
- b) **Can you provide some detail to whether you "role-play" an evil character or not?** When I roleplay its usually a neutral character, I roleplay just to talk with my friends in a fun way.

In general, those that often performed grieving considered the 3 actions below (of the 15 proposed actions) as heavily skewed towards always being a form of grieving:

- 1) **Corpse/Spawn Camping**
- 2) **Ninja Looting**
- 3) **Scamming**

- a) **Do you agree with the assessment of these actions as acts of grieving? Why or why not?** For the most part, these are the top 3 ways to grief people, but I usually don't try to scam people, its at too high of a risk of being banned from the game.

- b) **Have you performed any of these actions yourself? If so what do you feel you have gained and how do you feel afterwards?** I have corpse camped, and ninja looted, as well as scammed before. Corpse camping gets you nothing but the satisfaction of knowing you caused the other player to lose time playing the game. Ninja looting often gets you gear but earns you a bad reputation with anyone you group with, and scamming only works on really stupid players who are gullible, and can get you anything from lots of gold, to tons of items, but at a higher risk of being banned.

In general, those that often performed griefing only considered one action (of the 15 proposed actions) as skewed towards not being a form of griefing, this was Mob Camping.

- a) **Do you agree with the assessment of this actions not being an act of griefing? Why or why not?** This is actually a very big type of griefing, because you are causing a player to be unable to progress in the game.
- b) **Have you performed Mob Camping yourself? If so what do you feel you have gained and how do you feel afterwards?** I have once or twice, but never for a very long time, usually it happens without you knowing, or you are competing for a mob with several groups.

It was found in our analysis that all other actions (not listed in questions 6), according to self-identified griefing performers, were only sometimes to almost never a form of griefing. Do you agree with this, and can you give any examples? Honestly I feel that everything you can do that negatively affects another player with no way for them to fight it, is a form of griefing, now if people don't always use these forms of griefing, it doesn't make them any less a form of griefing.

H.2.4 Griefer (Survey ID 1020)

You have identified yourself as a MMORPG player that performs acts of griefing on a regular basis while playing MMORPGs.

- a) **How long had you played MMORPGs before you began griefing and how long have you played MMORPGs in total?** I played for 2 years before I began griefing and I've been playing MMORPGs for 13 years.
- b) **What was the reason that you began griefing?** When I entered the "competitive scene" I learned that griefing is an efficient way to get people to do their assigned tasks better. When something goes wrong, being nice is not the best way to handle things. It's what we call "getting people to put their game face on". When I would fail to complete my task I would get screamed at, threatened, called bad, retarded and other things that are used in MMORPGs and I noticed that it got me to improve. Also I learned the "making an example out of someone" strategy, which is targeting a player and embarrassing him in front of everyone else, so the rest know what's to be expected if they keep failing at their tasks. Calling names when something goes wrong is not "politically correct" but it's the right thing to do in order to correct a situation.

- c) **Why do you continue to grief today?** I do believe that griefing is a good method to use when addressing or correcting situations that keep ending in failure.

To explain it better in MMORPG terms it's called "being allergic to stupid stuff" or "becoming elitist". I don't know if you did or played anything competitively, but the more you do it the less tolerant you become. Given that probably 99% of the players in a MMORPG are not competitive everything they do will look like a failure to me. I try to stay away from PUGs (party up groups) and go activities with my groups of players only, but I still find myself playing with them. And it's always the case that one of those players will not be able to perform basic tasks. I will try to correct it, but that always goes wrong and ends up in griefing. Story of my life. Sometimes I wish I had less skill, would probably have more fun.

The act of griefing:

- a) **How do you select who you will perform griefing upon?** I target the people that grief me by constantly creating frustrating situations or people how's attitudes I don't like. I never picked on a random person for no reason, unless it's in the PvP aspect of the game, you can never know the people that you're matched against.

I also hate what we call "drama queens", people that have to make everything about themselves and throw a temper tantrum every time something doesn't go their way or that create dramatic situations just to attract attention. I will always call them out and grief them whenever the situation allows it, in any way possible.

- b) **What type of griefing do you enjoy the most and why? Can you give an example?** The type of griefing that I perform the most is verbal abuse when people fail at their tasks during competitive play or when they repeatedly fail at easy tasks by not paying attention. The only type of griefing I enjoy is camping someone in PvP and ruining his experience, but I rarely PvP.
- c) **Do you grief by yourself, in a group, or both? What do you prefer and why?** I usually grief by myself, unless it's in PvP. I only PvP with a group and we all participate in the corpse camping of the victim, but I prefer doing the griefing it alone because in every community there has to be a "bad guy" and I would rather take that upon myself and not involve other people.

Describe how you feel in relation to your need for _____ after performing griefing as opposed to before.

This question is confusing me, but I will try my best to answer.

- a) **Autonomy.** Everyone is free to do whatever they wish in a MMORPG and above all have fun, because that's what games are for. When someone stands between me and my goal and repeatedly makes me fail my objective, frustration will build up and I will grief him. In 90% of the cases will still result in me not achieving my goal but at least the frustration is somewhat gone.
- b) **Competence.** As I said, I would not grief someone for no reason. If he became the target of my griefing it means that I feel that my skills are better than his and I want

him to do better or disappear from my sight.

- c) **Relatedness.** I know that in most cases griefing someone will result in a burnt bridge (people are way to sensitive these days if you ask me) but it will also strengthen a number of other bridges when alleviating a frustrating situation. Some things just have to be said or done and people that try to always be politically correct or not offend other players will not have the courage to speak up.

During our study, we have noted that those that perform griefing in general rated competition as the highest motivational factor to play MMORPGs.

- a) **Would you agree with this and why?** I agree with the statement above. When you're not part of the competitive scene then there is no need to perform. Casual players will be there for casual activities, having fun, making friends, collecting items, I don't even know what those people do these days. But there is no pressure to achieve anything "now" "as fast as possible" "in the hardest way" etc. They can take as long as they want to reach their goals which means there will never end up in frustrating situations and most of the times they are all just as unskilled at the tasks they are choosing. So they take it slow and easy.

When you play competitive the pressure is always there. You need to be bigger, better, faster all the time. My group will spend countless hours trying to beat everyone else and when something keeps going wrong over and over frustration is going to build up, tempers are going to flare and griefing is going to happen. It takes a special kind of people that withstand that griefing. The longer it takes to get to the desired objective the more intense and targeted the griefing will become. For example it will start with "guys, we need to do more damage", evolve to "this guy [name] needs to step it up and do more damage he is way behind", then as the time goes by it get out of hand to everyone shouting something like "omg, you [name] are completely retarded, sort your shit out" etc.

But also, at the end of the day when the objective is complete we all hug and everything gets put behind us. Of course, it might end up with some people being removed from the group and replaced, but that's how it goes when it's all about being the best. I am yet to see a competitive group of people that don't verbally abuse each other. I've been playing MMORPGs for a very long time now.

During our study, we have noted that females that perform griefing rated role-playing as a motivational factor to play MMORPGs much higher than the male counterparts and all victims of griefing.

- a) **Does the role-playing aspect factor in to *your* motivation to play MMORPGs? Why or why not?** The role-playing aspect is not a factor in my motivation to play MMORPGs. I think role-playing is fun, but I also think it's more of an activity for casual players. When you play to be the best there are other things that take priority over role-playing. Sure, we will all hop on our brand new mounts we earned after claiming victory over hard content and parade them through the town, but that's all the role-play I do. (does this counts as griefing ? When the so called

hardcore players put on their hard earned armor and hop on their hard earned mounts and show off to the rest ?)

- b) **Can you provide some detail to whether you "role-play" an evil character or not?** I don't role-play, but when I pick a faction in a MMORPG I do pick the "bad guys". From my experience I can say that the "good guys" faction has most of the unskilled players.

In general, those that often performed griefing considered the 3 actions below (of the 15 proposed actions) as heavily skewed towards always being a form of griefing:

1) Corpse/Spawn Camping

2) Ninja Looting

3) Scamming

- a) **Do you agree with the assessment of these actions as acts of griefing? Why or why not?** I would say that PvP griefing is one of the most common acts that one will encounter in a MMORPG, so I agree with the Corpse Camping being a form of griefing.

Spawn camping I do not agree with. Your name is not on the mob's forehead which means it's not your mob. If I am camping a mob in order to get a drop and someone else comes and wants the same thing then it's his job to be better and faster than me in order to get the mob. If he takes his lack of skill as griefing then he just needs to try harder or come back later. No one will say "Sure, go ahead, have this mob, take the loot that I need". Not going to happen.

Ninja looting is the most annoying thing ever. I hate it and I get really angry when it happens. I never do it myself.

I don't know what to say about Scamming, as it is in the "real world", if something sounds too good to be true then it probably is. There will always be players looking to make a quick earning and scam other players, but I doubt that the purpose of the scamming is to grief someone. It's rather to earn something quick without having to put effort in it.

- b) **Have you performed any of these actions yourself? If so what do you feel you have gained and how do you feel afterwards?**

I did my fair share of Corpse Camping. I do it to "known" PvPers if I happen to come across them. I know it makes them mad because they care about PvP a lot and it makes me feel better than them (even if it's an unfair fight, let's say 10 vs 1).

In general, those that often performed griefing only considered one action (of the 15 proposed actions) as skewed towards not being a form of griefing, this was Mob Camping.

- a) **Do you agree with the assessment of this actions not being an act of grieving? Why or why not?** I think Mob Camping is not an act of grieving. Unless I am using an exploit to gain advantage over anyone that would challenge the mob I don't see why this would be grieving. It's a fair challenge, and if my challenger fails to get the mob before me, then he needs to get better at it.

Mob Camping could be considered an act of grieving only if someone would kill a quest giver mob over and over preventing people to advance with the quest or killing a vendor to prevent them from buying items, other than that I don't think it's an act of grieving.

- b) **Have you performed Mob Camping yourself? If so what do you feel you have gained and how do you feel afterwards?** I do Mob Camp a lot. If I need an item then I will sit there and kill that mob over and over until I get the item. It makes me feel really bored but when you are competitive you need to have the best items. If endless camping is what it takes to get those items then I will do it.

It was found in our analysis that all other actions (not listed in questions 6), according to self-identified grieving performers, were only sometimes to almost never a form of grieving. Do you agree with this, and can you give any examples?

I would say that 7 out of 15 of the acts listed above can be considered acts of grieving.

Verbal harrasment is the most common used form of grieving. Also the easiest.

Spamming I wouldn't consider it grieving. Sure, it's annoying, but you can always put the person doing it on ignore and never have to see it again. Currency selling messages are always and forever going to be there so if that grieves someone then there is something wrong with them. Ignore lists are quite big so if someone is that much annoyed with chat messages he can fill the ignore list. And if the spam is that bad, the chats can be disabled all together. The only spam that I can think of that would qualify as grieving is the "Anal [inserts random word]" spam in World of Warcraft but as I said, turn off the chat and it's all gone.

Kill stealing will grief everyone. So annoying, frustrating and there is nothing you can do about it.

Ninja Looting same as above.

Player killing/ganking annoying, but in most cases you have a choice to either turn PvP off or not play on a PvP server. But let's say it would count as grieving.

Corpse Camping ruins the game experience, so it counts as grieving in my opinion.

Mob Camping doesn't qualify as grieving to me.

Mob Training same as above.

Player blocking this is so situational, can also be by accident and perceived as intentional, I wouldn't say it's griefing.

Exploiting loopholes may annoy some people but I don't see this as griefing. I don't see someone finding an exploit and thinking "I'm going to use this to gain an advantage, I'm going to make so many people mad". I think it's more of "I'm going to use this to gain this advantage". Sure, some people might be annoyed by it, but most of the times they wouldn't do it themselves even if they knew about the exploit. Exploiting in a MMOPRG always ends up bad, by being banned or rerolled, so there is no need to grief over it, a small bug report will have the situation resolved.

Preying on new players. If you're taking the PvP route then you can expect to die every now and then. Unless they are being camped there is no reason to consider this an act of griefing.

Scamming. If you fall for it there is no one to be mad at except yourself. The person performing the scam has easy earnings in mind as opposed to griefing. I don't think scamming is an act of griefing.

Team disruption is an act of griefing in my opinion.

Event disruption same as above.

Role-playing disruption can just be considered as an event disruption. Again, it's situational and it's a very small niche.

I think you forgot one important form of griefing, which is destroying someone's name or a group's reputation by constantly attacking them (in public chats, forums, even via videos on youtube), reminding them and everyone else how bad they handled a situation or how unskilled their actions were. Players are forced to rename or relocate in order to escape the stigma and have a chance to integrate back in the community.

Thanks for your responses to the interview. If you don't mind I have a few further questions.

Follow-up Questions:

You state that "In every community there has to be a bad guy." My first reaction was, why? After reading through your entire interview I get the impression that you believe that without a bad guy, failures and incompetence in-game will go undisciplined and these failures will continue to happen. The 'bad guy' corrects mistakes at another player's expense, hence achieving success. Am I on the right track or can you explain that statement?

You are on the right track. Someone will have to be that person that doesn't care about people's feelings and tells it as it is. Otherwise the situation will not fix itself. People don't know what they are good at until they learn what they are bad at. You can't be good at everything. But 99% of the time no one will say "Guys I am terrible at dps, I

can't do my rotation and do mechanics at the same time, can I go tank or something ?". That's just not going to happen, not in today's MMO environment. Also, when you are in a competitive guild, team, whatever and you compete for something, be it PvP or PvE, the actual race for the first place only takes place twice a year, maybe 3 times if lucky and only for 1 or 2 months. Between those periods you are likely to lose players and get new ones. But you can't tell if they are bad or good until the next race, which can be 5 months after. But in those months you become sort of friends and that's when it's hard for most people to speak up against someone when something goes wrong.

You stated that Griefing can relieve your frustration in relation to Autonomy. So has your sense of control and freedom to perform desirable activities within the MMORPG increased?

I didn't really understand that question, I tried to reply as best as I could. The general idea is that if I can get the bad players to leave my group or get better (not like that ever happens) and never wish to join one of my groups again, the level of fun I have increases, I am more willing to continue with the current activity or engage in other activities with a group that doesn't have unskilled players with an ego the size of Europe.

In relation to Relatedness with the MMORPG community, are you saying that by disciplining and/or removing a less skilled player from your group, it makes the bond between more skilled players stronger?

Yes it does. Having an unskilled player around and having to suffer because of his mistakes every time will frustrate the rest of the players and even make them quit. 90% of the time it's some wannabe girl gamer that hooks up with one of the very good players and you have to put up with her so you can keep her boyfriend. But that only works for a limited amount of time before the rest of your players will either start moaning, refuse to join activities or quit. I don't know if the bonds grow stronger, it's mostly the case that not everyone likes everyone in competitive guilds, but as long as there aren't any players raising the levels of frustration, the least I can say is that the bonds won't get weaker.

You state that the 'good' faction attracts more unskilled players. Which faction do you believe attracts more griefers, and why?

That is a very good question, I never thought of that. But judging by the chat I would say the "good faction" would hold the record of griefers as well as for unskilled players. I think they just get frustrated at each other at some point. Most of the griefing I see done by the "bad faction" is mostly related to PvP.

In regards to corpse camping, you say that it ruins the game experience, yet in the previous questions you confirmed that you also corpse camp known PvPers. Can you explain this further?

When you're a low level guy playing along or if you're just max level farming some materials or doing your daily quests and you get jumped by some guy that kills you and

camps you then it's a ruined experience. But if I'm going to jump on a PvPer looking for a fight then that's not the same thing. Most of the time these known PvPers are griefers themselves. It's just next level griefing when you corpse camp another PvPer. I don't know how to explain it in more detail, you just have to do it to understand it. It's the same thing when you team fight in PvP and my team beats the other team and then you have one of the guys that just lost get angry and spam "1 v 1 me bro" until you kill him 1 v 1 and corpse camp him until he gives up.

I hope this helps

H.2.5 Griever (Survey ID 1058)

You have identified yourself as a MMORPG player that performs acts of griefing on a regular basis while playing MMORPGs.

- a) **How long had you played MMORPGs before you began griefing and how long have you played MMORPGs in total?** I've been playing MMORPGS for a while now. In some games it is easier to grief people than in others. Ultima Online is the game where it all started. I was maybe 10 or 11 years of age when I started playing. I probably started griefing a few months after I started playing.
- b) **What was the reason that you began griefing?** Boredom or because it advances me farther along into the game. If killing other players is possible, I tend to do it as much as possible. If I need a certain mob kill in order to move ahead in the game I will kill steal without hesitation. Ninja looting is another way of advancing in a game so I will not hesitate to do that either.
- c) **Why do you continue to grief today?** Same reason as answer 1b

The act of griefing:

- a) **How do you select who you will perform griefing upon?** Whoever is near me. I really don't make it personal.
- b) **What type of griefing do you enjoy the most and why? Can you give an example?** It depends on the game. I do enjoy PvPing with other players so I tend to pick fights/kill players that don't want to PvP. Kill stealing and ninja looting is another way I like to grief if I am trying to get ahead. Preying on new players is fun when I get bored but I tend to try and get good PvP when I can. If I can't PvP in a certain area, I will try and group up some agro mobs and run to their area and die. This last example is if I have run out of things to do.
- c) **Do you grief by yourself, in a group, or both? What do you prefer and why?** I usually grief by myself but prefer when I am in a group. When I play with others I will most likely be in vent with them. When group griefing occurs it tends to be more fun.

Describe how you feel in relation to your need for _____ after performing grieving as opposed to before.

- a) **Autonomy.** I really don't feel a need for a sense of control after performing grieving. I usually do it to get a cheap laugh.
- b) **Competence.** Sometimes grieving does make me feel a little more skilled.
- c) **Relatedness.** I have no sense of need for Relatedness when I play MMOs by myself. If I am representing a guild however, I tend not to grief as much so I don't bring a bad reputation to the clan I represent unless it is someone from a rival clan.

During our study, we have noted that those that perform grieving in general rated competition as the highest motivational factor to play MMORPGs.

- a) **Would you agree with this and why?** I would totally agree with this. Being competitive is my nature when it comes to MMOs and games in general. I'll do anything to set challengers back. If they are in a rival guild then I will grief them until either they leave the area or I get outnumbered and die.

During our study, we have noted that females that perform grieving rated role-playing as a motivational factor to play MMORPGs much higher than the male counterparts and all victims of grieving.

- a) **Does the role-playing aspect factor in to *your* motivation to play MMORPGs? Why or why not?** I actually enjoy roleplaying in MMOs but I do not believe it would be a factor of me grieving. I don't Role-play in every MMO I play. I will say, when I do Role-play, my grieving tends to take place in a group setting. More than likely I am in a group when we grief a certain spawn while RPing.
- b) **Can you provide some detail to whether you "role-play" an evil character or not?** I play/Role-play an evil character 95% of the time. To me, it is much more satisfying to take up the evil aspect in game because I feel there is more freedom with my character creation/backstory (when roleplaying).

In general, those that often performed grieving considered the 3 actions below (of the 15 proposed actions) as heavily skewed towards always being a form of grieving:

- 1) **Corpse/Spawn Camping**
- 2) **Ninja Looting**
- 3) **Scamming**

- a) **Do you agree with the assessment of these actions as acts of grieving? Why or why not?** I will agree that those 3 actions are acts of grieving. All of them set other players at an intended disadvantage.

- b) **Have you performed any of these actions yourself? If so what do you feel you have gained and how do you feel afterwards?** I have performed those actions although I do not like to scam players. When spawn camping someone I feel like I am sending a message, almost like saying "you are not welcome here." With Ninja Looting, I don't feel anything. To me it is just gaining loot to better myself. I frown upon scamming and tend to avoid it. It is usually punishable by ToS.

In general, those that often performed griefing only considered one action (of the 15 proposed actions) as skewed towards not being a form of griefing, this was Mob Camping.

- a) **Do you agree with the assessment of this actions not being an act of griefing? Why or why not?** I could go either way on this question. If you are camping a spawn in order to finish a quest I would not consider it griefing. On the other hand, if you are camping a spawn in a newbie area that you obviously do not and you are doing it just to annoy other players, I would consider that griefing.
- b) **Have you performed Mob Camping yourself? If so what do you feel you have gained and how do you feel afterwards?**

It was found in our analysis that all other actions (not listed in questions 6), according to self-identified griefing performers, were only sometimes to almost never a form of griefing. Do you agree with this, and can you give any examples? I disagree. I think all options except for #5 and #7 (sometimes) are all forms of griefing. The reason I believe they are acts of griefing is because someone is intentionally performing these actions in order to annoy or disrupt another player.

Follow-up Questions:

Early on in your interview you state that you "tend to pick fights/kill players that don't want to PvP." Then you explain that "I tend to try and get good PvP when I can". These are opposing views. Is it the boredom you stated when killing weak players that sets in, that encourages you to go after tougher competition? Please describe this further. If I have the opportunity to kill someone in game, I will most likely take advantage of the opportunity. Usually, when I'm picking fights with people that don't want PvP is because I am solo. When I am with a group of people looking for PvP (ie: a Clan), we tend to gravitate toward an area where other clans will be thus increasing our odds of finding group PvP which is usually a little more difficult than just picking on randoms.

You mention reputation with your clan. Do you avoid griefing when your reputation with your clan/guild/etc may take a hit? Do you consider your general reputation with the game community or only your clan? I am really only concerned about the clan reputation. I do not concern myself with the game community reputation, but they usually go hand in hand.

You mention that scamming can be punishable by Terms of Service, so you avoid it. So the higher the penalty to an act of griefing the more likely you will

avoid that type of action? How far would you go? I have never been a fan of scamming. It depends how high the penalty is. I will obviously will not do anything that will put my account in jeopardy but if my biggest penalty is losing gear/xp, ill push the limits.

H.2.6 Griefer (Survey ID 1098)

You have identified yourself as a MMORPG player that performs acts of grieving on a regular basis while playing MMORPGs.

- a) **How long had you played MMORPGs before you began grieving and how long have you played MMORPGs in total?** I started grieving after 1.5 years of playing. I have been playing mmorpgs discontinuously for 4 years.
- b) **What was the reason that you began grieving?** The game was seriously skewed in favour of those "classes" that i was grieving. People playing those classes were griefers in the first place and, due to this skew, i had developed my character in such a way that it was mostly, if not only, effective against people playing those classes.
- c) **Why do you continue to grief today?** i don't play mmorpgs anymore and if i do i only play pvp in warfronts or battlegrounds. If the game presents once again some kind of skew i quit altogether.

The act of grieving:

- a) **How do you select who you will perform grieving upon?** They are people that show to be griefers themselves or that take advantage of game biases/ exploits or that use groups to stop people from playing.
- b) **What type of grieving do you enjoy the most and why? Can you give an example?** spawn camping exploiters or dead members of group griefers
- c) **Do you grief by yourself, in a group, or both? What do you prefer and why?** by myself, because grieving with other people would mean doing exactly the thing i hate the most in griefers.

Describe how you feel in relation to your need for _____ after performing grieving as opposed to before.

- a) **Autonomy.** By grieving i can remove disturbers
- b) **Competence.** Grieving players using exploits or game biases requires a good knowledge of the game and its mechanics and fast thinking capability
- c) **Relatedness.** I don't feel related to the community after grieving, and generally, the more i grief the less likely it is that i will keep playing the game for long.

During our study, we have noted that those that perform griefing in general rated competition as the highest motivational factor to play MMORPGs.

- a) **Would you agree with this and why?** No i disagree since i believe that griefing is mostly a matter of finding or creating a set of circumstances that grant to the griever an overwhelming advantage and make the receiver feel impotent.

During our study, we have noted that females that perform griefing rated role-playing as a motivational factor to play MMORPGs much higher than the male counterparts and all victims of griefing.

- a) **Does the role-playing aspect factor in to *your* motivation to play MMORPGs? Why or why not?** Not really since i rarely role-play.
- b) **Can you provide some detail to whether you "role-play" an evil character or not?** My kind of griefing is actually quite "good-oriented".

In general, those that often performed griefing considered the 3 actions below (of the 15 proposed actions) as heavily skewed towards always being a form of griefing:

- 1) **Corpse/Spawn Camping**
- 2) **Ninja Looting**
- 3) **Scamming**

- a) **Do you agree with the assessment of these actions as acts of griefing? Why or why not?** I agree because they are based on a condition of disadvantage on the receiving side.
- b) **Have you performed any of these actions yourself? If so what do you feel you have gained and how do you feel afterwards?** I have performed spawn camping against other griefers and i have particularly enjoyed their complaints. I have performed ninja looting against people that i knew for sure they were ninja looters. i have never scammed anyone, even those that deserved it, since it requires a long time effort that i would consider pathological

In general, those that often performed griefing only considered one action (of the 15 proposed actions) as skewed towards not being a form of griefing, this was Mob Camping.

- a) **Do you agree with the assessment of this actions not being an act of griefing? Why or why not?** Mob camping is mostly based on chance and reflexes, since it involves acquiring the target faster than those around you, and those two factors for me can never be manipulated by players in such a way that someone is 100% unable to compete.
- b) **Have you performed Mob Camping yourself? If so what do you feel you have gained and how do you feel afterwards?** I have camped for very little time some

mobs because it was necessary to acquire one time usable items. After that one time i never bothered anymore.

It was found in our analysis that all other actions (not listed in questions 6), according to self-identified grieving performers, were only sometimes to almost never a form of grieving. Do you agree with this, and can you give any examples?

I fear that could be related to a bias in the methodology used for the interview. First of all, i don't remember if during the interview i could only pick three options. In that case, that would force the test subject into restricting his/her choice toward what he/she has experienced the most, because, even though low frequency events could have a greater emotional impact, they lasts for a short time and in time are forgotten, contrary to more frequent events with less severe emotional impact. In other fields, this is called "aliasing".

Even though the methodology doesn't force the subject toward that choice, it would help asking the test subject about the most emotionally strong grieving episode he/she remembers. In that case some of those other options could be mentioned. As an example, role-play disruptions and event disruptions can be considered low frequency events since their organization requires a mid-long time, their execution a mid-short time and they are usually repeated few times or none at all if they are disrupted and organizers feel distress. Moreover, people that perform role-play tend to pick their locations in such a way to be as much isolated as possible.

Role- play in particular is based on a sub-population that should be weighted in the greater population or independently analyzed.

Spamming, verbal harrassement and team distruption, at the contrary, can be ignored by test subjects because most games nowadays provide some form of ignore function that helps removing the issue. Moreover, i have rarely heard about people managing to conduct such activities for long without either being removed from the game by admins, without being ostracized by the community or, just in one case, starting their own sub-community (search for Goon squad). Once again these kind of behaviors tend to have a short time and are easily forgotten.

Mob-camping, mob luring and kill stealing once again are hardly observed nowadays due to game mechanics that lock mobs to the first attacker; moreover it is quite easy to fix either moving to another area or switching channel.

The same can be said for player blocking since most of the times either collisions are not implemented or the interactive item cannot be fully blocked or there are several of them around.

I believe that most people do not consider loopholes' exploiting a kind of grieving because they blame programmers for them and the distress they suffer is imputed on them; moreover most people tend to believe programmers do not play their games and, even if they do play, they are disguised as normal players, so it is unlikely they will develop the idea that programmers are aware of such exploits.

Quite often, exploiting loopholes is used as a medium to perform different kinds of griefing, such as creating a very powerful character that can do an unintended high damage and then mob-camping or spawn-camping other players, or scamming people by using a currency acquired through cheats/hacks/ exploits.

That means that the primary griefing(exploiting) is disguised by the secondary (spawn-camping/scamming). Moreover, the griefer quite often is only interested in the secondary griefing.

In my experience, since fixing this kind of loopholes takes a long time, when they aren't ignored by programmers, in time, non-exploiting players will either quit the game, join the side of the exploiters or develop an ethical (rational) interpretation that eventually makes them feel better. In all those cases they reduce their distress and sense of impotency, that once again is not generally imputed on players.

About Preying on new players i have no idea why it is not mentioned. In most games i have played very low level zones are usually very hard to reach and players cannot attack each others.

Follow-up Questions:

You stated that "The more I grief, the less likely it is that I will keep playing for long." So you will quit the game? Is this due to the game balance you mentioned earlier in the interview, or just due to the griefing itself? Yes i indeed quit the game. Since griefing is a consequence of lack of game balance, as the matter is ignored by those that manage the game i will eventually be bored of playing the game in a way that it is not natural to me so i quit.

You stated that "Griefing can remove disturbers." Does this make you feel more autonomous? Please describe. I consider Disturbers those players that abuse the system to interrupt others activity, not to get a momentary gain but to intentionally cause frustration into others. By retaliating to them with griefing, one can be a little more autonomous, not entirely because eventually you are still dedicating some of your time to them instead of doing what you want to do.

H.2.7 Griefer (Survey ID 1156)

You have identified yourself as a MMORPG player that performs acts of grieving on a regular basis while playing MMORPGs.

- a) **How long had you played MMORPGs before you began grieving and how long have you played MMORPGs in total?** I have been playing MMORPG's for approximately 5 years now. I believe I started to grief since day one.
- b) **What was the reason that you began grieving?** Griefing to me is a reaction from me to others who make certain comments or reactions in game such as boasting, bragging, rude commentary, or in game harassment. I see myself grieving as a way to correct those that are acting inappropriately.
- c) **Why do you continue to grief today?** I grief those that boast or believe they are better than someone in a game via chatting or in game voice chat. It's a method for me to rather than setting someone to ignore I can get a sense of entertainment from the grieving. Griefing someone who is someone of a bully to others brings me joy.

The act of grieving:

- a) **How do you select who you will perform grieving upon?** I select an action of grieving as a reaction to someone who is doing it themselves. I see it as a reaction to those that are bullies in game. Possibly someone that is taking the game very seriously (reading off stats) and yelling (Posting in Caps).
- b) **What type of grieving do you enjoy the most and why? Can you give an example?** The type of grieving I enjoy is someone who is consistently vocal in a chat discussion within the game I repeat the words that they are saying or repeat a set line of words. To essentially mimic the other person to bring them to a sense of realization that they should stop chatting. This frequently becomes the most entertaining because if the person realizes what they are doing they will stop. IF they are stubborn or not intelligent enough to realize I am trying to get a rise out of them or trying to get them to stop what they are doing it becomes more entertaining for myself.

A second type of grieving that I can enjoy is if someone is bullying other people or saying rude or racist remarks. In MMORPG's that are PVP based which is what I primarily play. I have had the best or one of the best characters at my level or play style. So my grieving would then pursue with continually focusing killing that one person. If a resurrection pad is nearby I will continue to focus and kill that person in game until they log off the game or they leave the zone. This is the most intense type of grieving I have done and have only done it in extreme cases when someone is really vocal and disruptive in a game.

- c) **Do you grief by yourself, in a group, or both? What do you prefer and why?** It is dependent on the game, but I would say it's 50 / 50. When I grief in a group I think the group or me becomes the bully. I don't like this so much because it can hurt my

reputation. I prefer to do the grieving individually because it's more of providing a lesson to the individual or a disciplinary action toward that person for doing what they are doing.

Describe how you feel in relation to your need for _____ after performing grieving as opposed to before.

Competence.

During our study, we have noted that those that perform grieving in general rated competition as the highest motivational factor to play MMORPGs.

a) **Would you agree with this and why?** I would agree somewhat, I think grieving in games and out of games is a factor in driving competition. I think gaming creates anonymity and creates an open playing field for grieving. In "real life" grieving can be performed in any sport but I think would transpire to what someone would consider bullying. Performing grieving in games can allow someone that is not physically fit, smaller, and non-athletic, the opportunity to do something in game that they are not in the real world. A nerd per say can turn into the "Strong Man/Woman" in a game as a sense of accomplishment and with that accomplishment depending on how they handle themselves can very likely turn into a griefer. The higher the level you are in game especially when it comes to PVP can make you untouchable, can bring popularity, and can create an illusion that you have something physically that others do not.

During our study, we have noted that females that perform grieving rated role-playing as a motivational factor to play MMORPGs much higher than the male counterparts and all victims of grieving.

a) **Does the role-playing aspect factor in to *your* motivation to play MMORPGs? Why or why not?** I do not pursue the act of role-playing in MMORPGs, I wouldn't be able to answer the question. It would not factor into my motivation to play.

b) **Can you provide some detail to whether you "role-play" an evil character or not?** I do not role-play in an MMO however when I choose a character to play, the reason I play it is typically almost 90% a female looking character. The reason I choose a female character is because it almost always looks 100% slutty in every MMO.

In general, those that often performed grieving considered the 3 actions below (of the 15 proposed actions) as heavily skewed towards always being a form of grieving:

- 1) **Corpse/Spawn Camping**
- 2) **Ninja Looting**
- 3) **Scamming**

- a) **Do you agree with the assessment of these actions as acts of griefing? Why or why not?** My source of griefing actions, top 3 would be, 1) Corpse/Spawn Camping, 2) Player Killing / Ganking, and 3) Spamming. The act of Corpse / Spawn Camping is something I would consider. Ninja Looting has not been an issue for me in the last 3 years because gaming loot systems have been updated or corrected to prevent this from happening. I would not consider scamming an act of griefing that I have seen or taken part of. I would consider Scamming as an act of theft and stupidity upon the person that ends up as the victim.
- b) **Have you performed any of these actions yourself? If so what do you feel you have gained and how do you feel afterwards?** The act of Corpse/Spawn Camping has been something frequent I have done. It is really dependent upon the person and how they are acting in the Zone. I do it as a means to police an area, rather than calling in a GM in game, myself as a competitive gamer will Corpse and Spawn camp a person until they log out of the game. To me I feel good, I feel I have done the zone or area a justice or sense of good for the community within the game.

In general, those that often performed griefing only considered one action (of the 15 proposed actions) as skewed towards not being a form of griefing, this was Mob Camping.

- a) **Do you agree with the assessment of this actions not being an act of griefing? Why or why not?** I agree that this is not an act of griefing, I would consider than an act of someone wasting away trying to get a piece of gear or loot.
- b) **Have you performed Mob Camping yourself? If so what do you feel you have gained and how do you feel afterwards?** I have seen Mob Camping being done. It's dependent on whether the game encourages it with a quest or reward. In the cases typically when it's not a quest or a given reward the game developers typically correct the respawn rates or change the Mob.

It was found in our analysis that all other actions (not listed in questions 6), according to self-identified griefing performers, were only sometimes to almost never a form of griefing. Do you agree with this, and can you give any examples? I don't agree. In any instance where something affects another player directly, in a player vs player form verbally can be considered griefing.

These items below I would consider the highest forms of griefing. Verbal Harassment and Spamming an area with mimicking a zone or player is always very bad when I see it. When this occurs that's when I respond with disrupting the players and possibly lead to spawn camping.

- Verbal harassment - Intentional misuse of the chat interface or voice system in order to offend, harass, insult, threaten, or humiliate another player.
- Spamming - Intentionally filling a chat channel repeatedly with messages of low relevance, utility, or messages that are against the game rules (such as in-game currency selling).

- Kill stealing - When a player attempts to kill a mob that is already engaged in combat with another player, in order to reap their reward of experience, items or in-game currency.
- Team disruption - When a player deliberately performs actions detrimental to their team, including friendly fire, wasting key game elements, luring unwanted mobs and colluding with the opposition.
- Preying on new players - The killing of new and inexperienced players for fun, even though there is little direct benefit from attacker to the victim.

H.3 Intersector Transcripts

H.3.1 Intersector (Survey ID 68)

Griefed point-of-view:

You have identified yourself as a MMORPG player that is subjected to griefing on a regular basis while playing MMORPGs.

- a) How long had you played MMORPGs before you were first subjected to griefing and how long have you played MMORPGs in total?** Not long at all. Probably the first week.
- b) What was your reaction to it at the time?** I was angry. I was also young, so objectivity and maturity weren't on my side.
- c) How would you react today if the same thing happened?** I would be annoyed still, but I know better now how to handle the situation.

Being subjected to griefing:

- a) Do you have any ideas what has incited the griefer to target you? If so, what?** No idea.
- b) What type of griefing causes the most impact upon you and how does it affect your character, and yourself in the real world? Can you give any examples?** Anything that wastes my time. I play games to have fun, I don't want drama or people wasting my time for no real reason.
- c) What actions do you take (both in-game and in real life) in response to being griefed?** In-game I make sure I pay them back in kind. In real life I'm not too fussed. It's frustrating to some extent, but I'm not physically violent towards things or people.

Describe how you feel in relation to your need for ___B___ after being subjected to griefing as opposed to before.

- a) Autonomy.**
- b) Competence.**
- c) Relatedness.**

I felt I needed to improve to make sure it didn't happen again or I was better prepared to handle it should it happen again.

During our study, we have noted that those subjected to grief play in general rated customization of their avatar as one of the highest motivational factors to play MMORPGs.

- a) **Would you agree with this and why? Or why not?** I disagree. It makes no difference to me whatsoever. I'm zoomed out to the extent where I can barely see my character.
- b) **What types of customization have you applied to your avatar that you believe may incite griefers to target you?** None that I can think of.

During our study, we have noted that those subjected to grief play in general rated character advancement and learning the game mechanics as two very high motivational factors.

- a) **Would you agree with these? Why or why not?** Learning the game mechanics is a big thing for me. I was the strategist when it came to new content and how we should kill bosses for a guild competing for world firsts. The ability to formulate an effective and efficient plan of action to overcome your competitors is a great feeling.
- b) **Do you feel that being motivated by advancement and game mechanics are valuable to a victim of griefing? Why or why not?** Yes, because learning the game and your class better would serve you better in future situations.

In general, those that were often subjected to griefing considered the 7 actions below (of the 15 proposed actions) as heavily skewed towards always being a form of griefing:

- a) **Do you agree with the assessment of these actions as acts of griefing? Why or why not?** Yes. Even if done unintentionally, it's still griefing to the player on the other side of the screen.
- b) **Have you been subjected to any of these actions yourself? If so how did you react and feel afterwards?**
 - 1) **Verbal Harassment**
 - 2) **Ninja Looting**
 - 3) **Corpse/Spawn Camping**
 - 4) **Preying on New Players**
 - 5) **Scamming**
 - 6) **Team Disruption**
 - 7) **Event Disruption**

All of them. It was annoying at first, but by the later stages of the list, I'd learned to accept it as part and parcel of the game and that I would take my time to get my own back.

In general, those that were often subjected to griefing only considered one action (of the 15 proposed actions) as skewed towards not being a form of griefing, this was Mob Camping:

- a) **Do you agree with the assessment of this actions not being an act of griefing? Why or why not?** I think it's fair game to do it.
- b) **Have you been subjected to Mob Camping yourself? If so how did you react and feel afterwards?** I have and I just had to wait it out because I couldn't kill their characters. It was annoying, but I just came back to it at a later date.

It was found in our analysis that all other actions (not listed in questions 6 and 7), were not heavily skewed towards either always or never being a form of griefing, by those often subjected to griefing. Do you agree with this, and can you give any examples? I agree.

Griever point-of-view:

You have identified yourself as a MMORPG player that performs acts of griefing on a regular basis while playing MMORPGs.

How long had you played MMORPGs before you began griefing and how long have you played MMORPGs in total? Quite quickly after I had started.

- a) **What was the reason that you began griefing?** Mostly to get back at people. If I was killed whilst levelling or going about my day-to-day, I'd make sure the other faction paid for my inconvenience.
- b) **Why do you continue to grief today?** For the same reasons as mentioned above. I sometimes do it for the hell of it, but it's mostly a retaliatory action or prompted as such.

The act of griefing:

- a) **How do you select who you will perform griefing upon?** Often times if I can find someone that has done it to me, I will do it to them. I'm not a proponent of an eye for an eye, more like an eye for a limb... If people decide to inconvenience me then I'll go out of my way to ruin their gaming session by killing them, corpse camping and the like.
- b) **What type of griefing do you enjoy the most and why? Can you give an example?** Corpse camping is a good one. I play a Death Knight which has an ability to pull enemies closer to my attack range when they're at a distance, i.e. escaping. It always brings a smile to my face when I imagine them thinking they've gotten away, only to be pulled back and find themselves at square one wondering why the hell they bothered annoying me.
- c) **Do you grief by yourself, in a group, or both? What do you prefer and why?** Mostly by myself because of the nature of the events. Often times it's retaliatory

and I'm there and prepared to handle it. Sometimes if I need a group to achieve my aim then so be it, it's a means to an end.

Describe how you feel in relation to your need for ____B____ after performing grieving as opposed to before.

- a. **Autonomy.**
- b. **Competence.**
- c. **Relatedness.**

It's nice to outwit a player and overpower him or her.

During our study, we have noted that those that perform grieving in general rated competition as the highest motivational factor to play MMORPGs.

- a) **Would you agree with this and why?** I do agree and I'm the same. The game that I play, World of Warcraft, isn't very challenging in and of itself anymore. The real challenge comes when pitting yourself against the millions of other players and thousands of other guilds to achieve the same goal at different rates; The one that does it the first wins.

During our study, we have noted that females that perform grieving rated role-playing as a motivational factor to play MMORPGs much higher than the male counterparts and all victims of grieving.

- a) **Does the role-playing aspect factor in to *your* motivation to play MMORPGs? Why or why not?** It doesn't and I really have never considered the role-playing aspect of the game, so I couldn't possibly begin to understand why.
- b) **Can you provide some detail to whether you "role-play" an evil character or not?** I've never role-played, though I can imagine that if I did, I would be an evil character.

In general, those that often performed grieving considered the 3 actions below (of the 15 proposed actions) as heavily skewed towards always being a form of grieving:

- 1) **Corpse/Spawn Camping**
- 2) **Ninja Looting**
- 3) **Scamming**

- a) **Do you agree with the assessment of these actions as acts of grieving? Why or why not?** I think all of them can cause distress either intentionally or unintentionally, so it would really depend on the intentions of the perpetrator, though I imagine for whomever is on the receiving end, it's most definitely grieving.
- b) **Have you performed any of these actions yourself? If so what do you feel you have gained and how do you feel afterwards?** I have performed all three across various games.

Corpse camping was to harass someone in-game that had killed me or inconvenienced me. I wanted to let them know that if they play with fire, they will get burnt. While it's not as noble as simply teaching them a lesson, it also feels good to know that you've made them pay for what they've done.

Ninja looting was an accident and wasn't done with malicious intent.

Scamming was performed on a game where it's permitted in-game and in some ways encouraged. There are a lot of politics in the game and espionage is bread and butter of large scale coalition warfare. There are enemy spies in every large alliance and coalition, I was simply performing my duty.

In general, those that often performed griefing only considered one action (of the 15 proposed actions) as skewed towards not being a form of griefing, this was Mob Camping.

- a) **Do you agree with the assessment of this actions not being an act of griefing? Why or why not?** I agree that it's not a form of griefing. It's fair game and it's available to everyone, if a person is too slow to tag the mob first, it's his loss. Adapt or die.
- b) **Have you performed Mob Camping yourself? If so what do you feel you have gained and how do you feel afterwards?** I have not.

It was found in our analysis that all other actions (not listed in questions 6), according to self-identified griefing performers, were only sometimes to almost never a form of griefing. Do you agree with this, and can you give any examples?
I don't agree.

H.3.2 Intersector (Survey ID 1057)

Griefed point-of-view:

You have identified yourself as a MMORPG player that is subjected to griefing on a regular basis while playing MMORPGs.

- a) **How long had you played MMORPGs before you were first subjected to griefing and how long have you played MMORPGs in total?** I've been playing MMO's since around 2001, and griefing pretty much comes and goes with the territory so I'd say for almost as long as my MMO career in total
- b) **What was your reaction to it at the time?** Don't get mad, get even.
- c) **How would you react today if the same thing happened?** I don't think there would be a difference in my reaction. I tend to use my resourcefulness to respond to actions like this.

Being subjected to grieving:

- a) **Do you have any ideas what has incited the griefer to target you? If so, what?** I'm normally rated as a pretty high tier player in pvp/pve so it isn't uncommon for people to specifically come after me for one thing or another.
- b) **What type of grieving causes the most impact upon you and how does it affect your character, and yourself in the real world? Can you give any examples?** I wouldn't say that there is a whole lot of grieving that I can't come back from, so I would say any general waste of time would be the biggest impact to me, since I can't get that wasted time back.
- c) **What actions do you take (both in-game and in real life) in response to being grieved?** Make sure before re engaging that I can be at a level playing field with my would-be griefer. Calling in friends before I rez is there are multiple people ganking me in a party, or by rezzing in a hard to see place so that I can heal up and swap out my gear to be more pvp friendly would be the other major thing.

Describe how you feel in relation to your need for _____ after being subjected to grieving as opposed to before.

- a) **Autonomy.** – I normally roll on a PVP server because I like the variety of gameplay I get out of it, and having to stay alert for any would be attackers. I don't think the simple fact that you're on a PVP server should necessarily mean you want to pvp 100% of the time though.
- b) **Competence.** – outsmarting other players and would be griefers is just another way for me to test my skills, I'd say. I'm definitely a gamer that always likes a challenge, regardless in what form it should happen to take at the time.
- c) **Relatedness.** – even if I'm not active in the community 100% while ingame, the sense of relatedness I get can also come from other areas like streaming and forums (official and unofficial).

During our study, we have noted that those subjected to grief play in general rated customization of their avatar as one of the highest motivational factors to play MMORPGs.

- a) **Would you agree with this and why? Or why not?** I am not that kind of player really. I tend to like to min max and put myself at the biggest advantage in a range of activities; if a race has a particular racial I have reason to value over others, that becomes the class or race I play regardless of what I would want to look like, although it is really nice when the two coincide (looking cool is usually regulated to alts, my main is for maximizing progression and wealth).
- b) **What types of customization have you applied to your avatar that you believe may incite griefers to target you?** Normally riding around in items that would convey wealth, although many times because of unwanted attention, if there is a

wardrobe option I'll downplay what items I have equipped by making my character look more plain and not stand out. Things like guild tags however I can't really hide, so the attention normally happens whether I want it or not

During our study, we have noted that those subjected to grief play in general rated character advancement and learning the game mechanics as two very high motivational factors.

- a) **Would you agree with these? Why or why not?** I would agree. The average person that's grieved would put those at high priority so they can be in a better position to stop getting ganked or have their mobs stolen in the future.
- b) **Do you feel that being motivated by advancement and game mechanics are valuable to a victim of griefing? Why or why not?** I think a lot of people who are grieved repeatedly are grieved because they try and bite off more than they are able to chew. It makes them a much bigger target when they go into areas their character might not be able to properly handle. The pve aspects alone would be frustrating enough, adding in other players looking to benefit in any way possible would just quadruple the problem.

In general, those that were often subjected to griefing considered the 7 actions below (of the 15 proposed actions) as heavily skewed towards always being a form of griefing:

- a) **Do you agree with the assessment of these actions as acts of griefing? Why or why not?** I can see everything but 3, 6, and 7. I would say every now and then there could be a good reason to commit any of those actions, although I wouldn't initiate them myself, only respond.
- b) **Have you been subjected to any of these actions yourself? If so how did you react and feel afterwards?** Verbal harassment is easy to deal with as you can just ignore players in chat on more modern day MMO's, I also add ninja looters and scammers to ignore to stop any future attempts they could try. The others I tend to respond by gathering my own group together and trying to do something about it.
 - 1) **Verbal Harassment**
 - 2) **Ninja Looting**
 - 3) **Corpse/Spawn Camping**
 - 4) **Preying on New Players**
 - 5) **Scamming**
 - 6) **Team Disruption**
 - 7) **Event Disruption**

In general, those that were often subjected to griefing only considered one action (of the 15 proposed actions) as skewed towards not being a form of griefing, this was Mob Camping:

- a) **Do you agree with the assessment of this actions not being an act of griefing? Why or why not?** I definitely agree, if you're dealing with random drop rates, you're more than likely going to come to a point where you have to sit in one area for a while killing the same mob to get what you need.
- b) **Have you been subjected to Mob Camping yourself?** If so how did you react and feel afterwards? If the mob is a quest mob, I tend to offer to party with the other player so we can mutually benefit. If I was there first, I try to counter grief and take more mobs than they can take from me.

It was found in our analysis that all other actions (not listed in questions 6 and 7), were not heavily skewed towards either always or never being a form of griefing, by those often subjected to griefing. Do you agree with this, and can you give any examples? I think that a lot of the other acts are pretty cut and dry, black or white. Stopping players from getting to resources or training mobs on them is pretty much griefing however you choose to look at it. Exploiting is griefing regardless, as the implications could reach much further than the griefer might think at the time.

Griever point-of-view:

You have identified yourself as a MMORPG player that performs acts of griefing on a regular basis while playing MMORPGs.

- a) **How long had you played MMORPGs before you began griefing and how long have you played MMORPGs in total?** I've been playing MMO's since the early 2000's, I would have to say I started with the browser-based game Runescape
- b) **What was the reason that you began griefing?** My guild was very PvP oriented, and I promoted a ruthless PvP strategy that was designed to drive most, if not all of my competition from the group PvP areas of the game.
- c) **Why do you continue to grief today?** Today things have kind of slowed down a bit in terms of what I do that would be considered griefing; I would call it more of a Robin Hood-esque type approach, mostly counter griefing trolls and overly confident players

The act of griefing:

- a) **How do you select who you will perform griefing upon?** Normally by their behaviour (in chat or game related activities), or if I have a considerable amount to gain by the griefing
- b) **What type of griefing do you enjoy the most and why?** Can you give an example? I partake in almost exclusively PvP related griefing, especially in full or partial PvP loot MMO's
- c) **Do you grief by yourself, in a group, or both? What do you prefer and why?** I do both, mostly because I'm in it if it's a raiding-centric game I tend to be in the upper

echelons of progression, so any group of mine would take a considerably larger group to take us down or disturb our fun. As a result of gear disparity, I'm sometimes able to do what I want against small groups of players by myself without much worry

Describe how you feel in relation to your need for _____ after performing griefing as opposed to before.

- a) **Autonomy.** – the sense of autonomy I would most closely relate to my pride in being a decently well-known player (for good and bad) in a lot of MMO's that I choose to play religiously.
- b) **Competence.** – making a conflict personal is one of the best ways of getting the most out of your competition. Defending your name and credibility is often just as important as protecting your pixels

Relatedness. – whether I make a name for myself as being some great PvPer or just another troll isn't all that important to me, I stay connected to the community in other ways such as writing class and raid boss strategy guides

During our study, we have noted that those that perform griefing in general rated competition as the highest motivational factor to play MMORPGs.

- a) **Would you agree with this and why?** Very much so, and I think griefing is a good enough way of telling who the determined, skilled, and competitive players are. Those confident in their abilities will come back for more, while those who aren't so much will just slink away to whatever safe zone they originally came from.

During our study, we have noted that females that perform griefing rated role-playing as a motivational factor to play MMORPGs much higher than the male counterparts and all victims of griefing.

- a) **Does the role-playing aspect factor in to *your* motivation to play MMORPGs?** Why or why not? Absolutely not, I play MMO's for the competitive aspect, not to step into the shoes of a new persona that I make for myself. If I wanted that I would probably take up LARPing or Dungeons and Dragons.

In general, those that often performed griefing considered the 3 actions below (of the 15 proposed actions) as heavily skewed towards always being a form of griefing:

- 1) **Corpse/Spawn Camping**
- 2) **Ninja Looting**
- 3) **Scamming**

- a) **Do you agree with the assessment of these actions as acts of griefing?** Why or why not? I agree with it for the most part. As for #'s 2 and 3, I feel it's just the simple concept of those who have not will have less hesitation in tarnishing their

would be good name in able to get a leg up financially in the game that they're playing.

- b) **Have you performed any of these actions yourself?** If so what do you feel you have gained and how do you feel afterwards? Mostly just corpse camping. I feel ninja looting is only justifiable when you've been in a particular spot for a while first and others choose to disrespect your space

In general, those that often performed griefing only considered one action (of the 15 proposed actions) as skewed towards not being a form of griefing, this was Mob Camping.

- a) **Do you agree with the assessment of this actions not being an act of griefing? Why or why not?** I can see how the majority of those would be considered griefing, but with things like mob camping and kill stealing have more of a grey area. Like I said, I do these regularly enough, but usually after I was the first and only person there.
- b) **Have you performed Mob Camping yourself?** If so what do you feel you have gained and how do you feel afterwards? If I need an item off of a mob, I tend to think of it as me vs the random number generator, not other players. If the item was guaranteed to drop every time, I wouldn't be camping it

It was found in our analysis that all other actions (not listed in questions 6), according to self-identified griefing performers, were only sometimes to almost never a form of griefing. Do you agree with this, and can you give any examples? I feel like I gave a few good examples above. For corpse camping, team disruption, and PKing I normally do it response to rival guilds/players, most of the time have instigated my actions in one way, shape, or form.

Follow-up Questions:

In your initial answers you identified that you "promoted ruthless pvp" initially, but later "more of a Robin Hood-esque approach". So you are saying you have gone from a classic example of griefing, to more of a vigilante? More or less, it really depends on each situation as they arise. I definitely lean more now towards not partaking in acts that would be considered griefing unless someone or some group does something to me that either inconveniences me or I just plain don't like.

You say you may also grief if you have "a considerable amount to gain by targeting the individual". What gain are you referring to? Reputation? Loot? And is the target still a griefer and you the vigilante? It can either be reputation via PVP or loot in some cases (although most games these days have turned away from letting you loot players corpses of their belongings once you kill them in combat). It can also be having control over a certain camp of monsters or area that would give me some sort of strategic advantage in the future

Regarding your comments about griefing and reputation. Are you saying that the

greater the hit is to your reputation the less likely you are to perform the action?

Perhaps in the beginning, but like I said, as time has gone on I tend to do these things more in retaliation than anything now. It could range in anything from an isolated incident to going the social engineering route or targeting the person's whole guild while hinting that the original member in question is why their group is having a much harder time. This in turn would hopefully get that group to drop or distance themselves from the initial offender so that the person has no means of operating efficiently on their own.

You state in other terms, that game design creates griefing opportunity. Such as mob camping forced upon players with player vs the random number generator (not another player). What other types of game design do you think breeds opportunity for griefing? I think flaws in game design lead to more griefing than anything. If there is a loophole that lets a player amass an unreasonable amount of power for a very small investment or time sink, I believe that 99% of the time the bug will be leaked pretty publicly and then thoroughly abused, regardless of what the punishment will be.

Appendix I: Human Research Ethics Committee Final Project Report

1) Project Details:

Project No:	A13-027
Project Name:	Causes, magnitude and implications of grieving in massively multiplayer online role-playing games

2) Principal Researcher Details:

Full Name:	Charlynn Miller
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3) Project Status:

Please indicate the current status of the project:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Data collection complete	<input type="checkbox"/> Abandoned
Completion date: 14 / 08 / 13	Please give reason:

4) Special Conditions:

If this project was approved subject to conditions, were these met?		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No * NB: If 'no', please provide an explanation:

5) Changes to project:

Were any amendments made to the originally approved project?	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes * NB: Please provide details:

6) Storage of Data:

Please indicate where the data collected during the course of this project is stored:
Protected files stored on both supervisors and PhD candidate's PC. Interviews received through and kept on password protected University email.

7) Research Participants:

Were there any events that had an adverse effect on the research participants?	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes * NB: Please provide details:

8) Summary of Results:

8.1. Please provide a short summary of the results of the project (no attachments please):
One paper was submitted and accepted through peer review for a conference in Melbourne (IE2013) regarding types of grieving and the respondents' attitude towards them - http://dl.acm.org/citation.cfm?doid=2513002.2513007 . A second paper was submitted to "The Computer Games Journal", peer reviewed, adjustments made and resubmitted. Published in March 2014 - http://tcjg.weebly.com/achterbosch-et-al.html Ongoing analysis of the data to explore the causes, magnitude and implications of grieving continues, with the PhD thesis main draft in progress.

8.2. Were the aims of the project (as stated in the application for approval) achieved? Please provide details.
Yes the aims were achieved. We managed to gather 1188 survey participants (the ethics application estimated ~1000), and 15 interview participants. The data obtained was of high quality, especially some of the answers from the open-ended questions in the survey, and from the anonymous interview subjects. The demographics were similar to other MMORPG studies and ensured our data had a relevant sample of the MMORPG population.

Glossary and Abbreviations

% (statistics)	Percentage
D&D	Dungeons & Dragons
EULA	End-User Licence Agreement
Gank	Typically involves players taking advantage of a weakened player by killing them for personal gain
Griefed	A player that has had the game disrupted by another player through griefing
Griever	A player that intentionally disrupts another player's game experience for his or her own personal enjoyment or gain
Griefing	When a player within a multiplayer online environment intentionally disrupts another player's game experience for his or her own personal enjoyment or gain
IBM	International Business Machines Corporation
Intersector	A term used in this research to distinguish the player that both causes grief and is subjected to griefing in almost equally high quantities
Lime Survey	Open source survey software with a secure back-end for building and conducting online surveys
MMO	Massively Multiplayer Online (Can refer to other genres of online games or may be shorthand for MMORPG)
MMOG	Massively Multiplayer Online Game (Can refer to other genres of online games or may be shorthand for MMORPG)
MMORPG	Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game
MOBA	Multiplayer Online Battle Arena
MOO	MUD, object oriented

MoP	Mists of Pandaria - an expansion pack from World of Warcraft
MUD	Multi-User Dungeon
MUVE	Multi-User Virtual Environment
n (statistics)	Subsample size
NPC	Non-Player Character - refers to characters in the game that are programmed and not a human player
Nvivo	A qualitative data analysis computer software package produced by QSR International
PvE	Player versus Environment - The term given when the human player is fighting computer programmed enemies
PvP	Player versus Player - The term given when a human player is fighting against another human player
RPG	Role-Playing Game
s (statistics)	Standard deviation
SDT	Self-Determination Theory - a theoretical framework that is concerned with the motivations of people, both intrinsically and extrinsically (detailed description in section 3.1.3)
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TA	Thematic Analysis - A method for identifying and analysing patterns in qualitative data (detailed description in section 3.4.5)
ToS	Terms of Service
WoW	World of Warcraft
\bar{x} (statistics)	mean

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