The nature of gaming is shifting

- The top-selling games have focused on online-multiplayer every year since 2008[1]

- Even pre-covid, 63% of adult players played online socially, for an average of 5hrs/week[2]

- COVID not only increased online presence, it opened the floodgates

- Grandparents, young kids, and everyone in between learned to appreciate online social interaction and online presence

[1] NDP Group Report [2] 2019 ESA Essential Facts report

Games provide a venue for social bonding

- Fortnite isn't a game, it's a place[1]

- 46% of Indian players use PUBG as a social platform[2]

- 'Bowling with friends' – the game becomes the background. What's important is being where your friends are

[1] Fortnite blog post [2] 2018 Quartz Study

Voice is essential for building social bonds

- Voice chat leads to stronger bonds[1] and deeper empathy[2] than text chat

- 80% of women report being empowered by access to online voice chat to interact in new ways… Even despite 75% of them reporting facing toxicity through voice[3]

- Women in Gaming: A Study of Female Players' Experiences in Online FPS Games by Allison McDaniel (2016)

[1] Oxford Academic: The Impact o Voice in an Online Gaming Community [2] American Psychologist: Voice-only communication enhances empathic accuracy [3] Women in Gaming: A Study of Female Players' Experiences in Online FPS Games by Allison McDaniel (2016)

The metaverse is about voice

Beyond social bonds, voice is also crucial for…

- Immersion in the virtual world

- Roleplay and identity exploration through character choice

- Rapid communication in e-sports or other team games

- Discoverability through proximity/positional voice chat

The darker side of voice chat…

## Toxicity in Gaming Is Dangerous. Here's How to Stand Up to It

Players often rationalize behaviors like harassment as a part of video game culture. But new research shows it has long-term negative effects.

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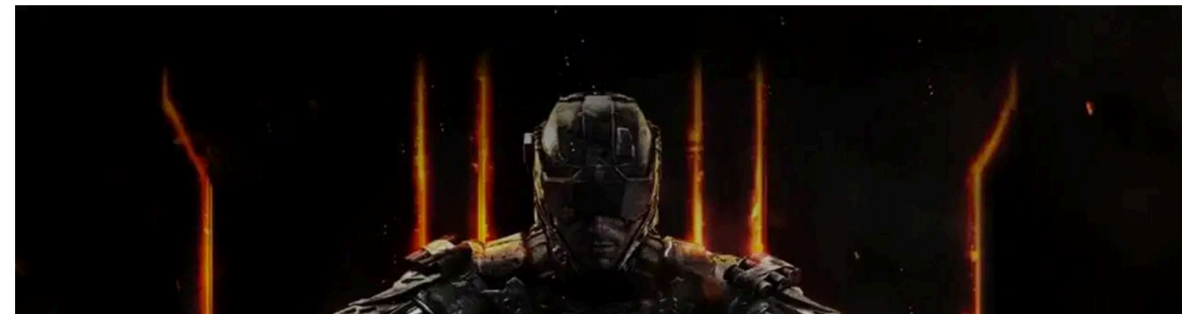
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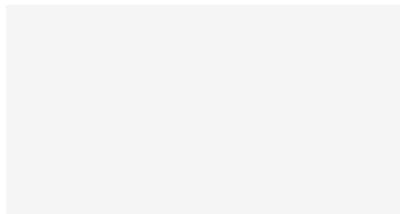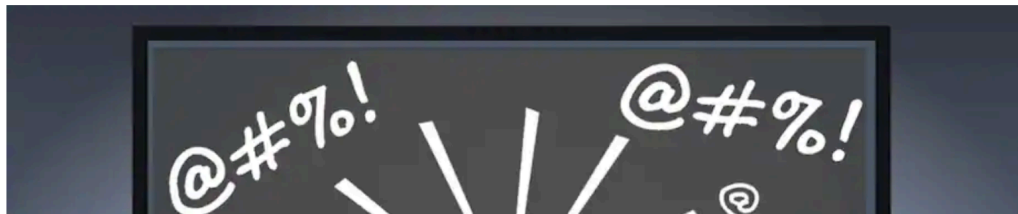
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The Online Gaming Community is Toxic

Home > TheGamer Originals > Gamers, It's Your Responsibility To Report Harassment In Voice Comms

Gamers, It's Your Responsibility To Report Harassment In Voice Comms

As more stories of harassment and toxicity in the gaming community come out, it's time for us all to take a look at what we can do to help.

BY HELEN ASHCROFT
PUBLISHED JUL 06, 2020

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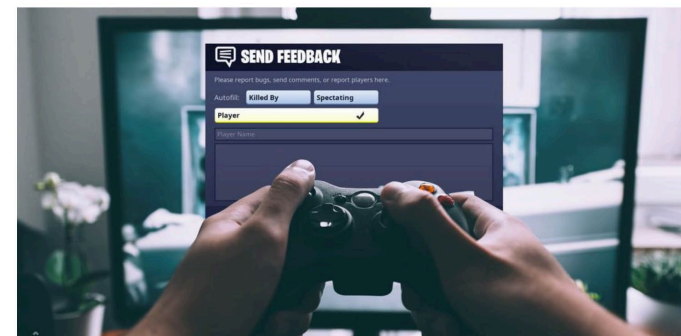
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The darker side continued…

- Voice is intimate, and many players don't feel comfortable sharing it – 59% of women seek to mask their gender online[1]

- Voice is a vector for toxicity and disruptive behavior - 68% of players experience severe abuse through voice chat, including physical threats, stalking and sustained harassment[2]

[1] Reach3 Insights research report [2] ADL: Free to Play? Hate, Harassment, and Positive Social Experiences in Online Games 2020

Other societal impacts…

Online game communities can mirror societal behavior, and vice versa:

- Crowd behavior + anonymity enables "Deindividuation": people lose external and individual constraints on their behavior [1]

- One only need have watched the news over the past year to see these behaviors play out both in online and in Real Life situations.

- Which begets which?

[1] "Players who play to make other players cry: the influence of anonymity and immersion," (Conference Proceedings ACE 2009)

And then there's our children…

- Depending on the online platform, from 40% to 75% of children are using online platforms long before they're 13

- Kids at least twice as likely to use platform blocking and reporting tools rather than tell their parents what happened

- Majority of kids who block or report say those users quickly find them again

- Kids who identify as LGBTQ experience harms at higher rates than non-LGBTQ peers

- And yet, Video Games named as one of the places that LGBTQ find "joy and strength"[1]

[1] The Trevor Project 2021 study

And the to cost studios is considerable

- 2020 ADL report shows 68-81% of players face serious toxicity (48% via in-game voice chat)… and 28% leave because of it[1]

For a 50M player game, that's:

- 50M * 68% * 48% * 28% = 4.6M players lost per year
- Nearly $50M/yr. lost in revenue for typical titles

Vivox Unite Copenhagen Study (2019)

- Voice chat players spend twice the time in-game as non-voice chat players
- Voice chat players 5x times as likely to be playing in Week #5 vs non-voice chat players

[1] ADL: Free to Play? Hate, Harassment, and Positive Social Experiences in Online Games 2020 [2] Vivox 2019 Unite Copenhagen Study

Voice chat technology is evolving

- Direct voice interactions between streamers and NPCs controlled by stream participants/followers

- Instantly recognize and adjust for dialect or even language differences between speakers

- Dynamic volume based upon how close/far you are from other players online

- Autonomous voice moderation addressing online toxicity including swearing, bullying, sexual harassment, grooming, etc.[1]

[1] ToxMod webpage