WHY CHARACTERS RIDE THE DEEPRUN TRAM

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to observe in general how many characters use the subway in World of Warcraft that goes between the cities Ironforge and Stormwind. Each end of the subway was observed and the number and types (race, class and level) of characters that rode the tram were also noted. This way it could be seen what class used this train the most. Along with this, numerous people were asked why they were using the subway as well as if they knew were they were going. The study was able to be precise with the research because there were two researchers who played the game at the same time. One stood at one end of the subway and the other stood at the other, so it was observed that the subway was used one way more than the other. More often than not, the data obtained from this research shows that most players use the tram as a means of transportation while completing quests. The data obtained from this research also illustrates a correlation between higher level players and deeprun tram usage. There was also a trend that was noticed by the researchers that the most abundant races that rode the deeprun tram were night elves and humans and although there were no relationships between class, it was interesting to find out that humans and night elves were more common users of the tram over gnomes and dwarves despite that gnomes and dwarves are habitants of the city Ironforge, which is one of the cities that the deeprun tram runs through.

Introduction

World of Warcraft is an online game that is played all over the world and is very popular amongst all age groups as well as different races. World of Warcraft is literally a separate world where different races, classes and age groups unite as well as a complicated and complex game that challenges players to be unique similar to our world

today. Nick Yee states in his article (Motivations for Play in Online Games 2006) that, "the variation [in World of Warcraft] suggests that MMORPGs may appeal to many players because they are able to cater to many different kinds of play styles" (772). Because of its complexity many research projects have been done on different aspects of the game, yet, there are still many research questions that can still be asked which proves that there is still much to learn about this online game.

In the game each player is responsible for completing different quests upon which they will receive different rewards, rewards ranging from currency to other goods that are valuable in the game. The question asked for this research project was to determine, on average, how many players use the Deeprun tram as well as how many of those players knew where they were traveling to. On a World of Warcraft website called WoWWiki, it explains what the tram is saying, "The Deeprun Tram is a long, fully enclosed, underground (and partially underwater) set of double tracks upon which rolls two sets of three wagons, all credited to the gnomes' technical engineering. The service is fast and smooth, and is provided free of charge to travelers between the Alliance-aligned cities of Ironforge and Stormwind City." For this specific research question we were unable to form specific hypotheses because of the fact there are so many different races and classes that can be created in this game and although there were some ideas, they were not specific enough to form a hypothesis. Some of these ideas were the fact that the characters that were from the two cities, Stormwind and Ironforge, were most likely to use the tram, just because they were so close and familiar with it. In the case of the others who were not from these two cities, it was guessed that these characters rode in order to complete quests by traveling to the necessary location, or just simply for transportation.

In order to figure this out, we asked different players questions in order to figure out why they were using the tram.

It is important to understand why players use the tram because by understanding why players use the tram it is possible to understand how important transportation is in the game of WOW. Through the research that was done, the answer to this research question shows the importance of WOW transportation. As stated earlier, the game is so complex that there have been many research projects done in the past that observe the different social aspects of the game. However, this research is unique because it observes the different players according to their knowledge with the tram as well as their knowledge of the geography of the rest of the game.

Methods

In order to collect data that was relevant to the research question concerning why characters ride the deeprun tram and which types of characters are most likely to be found there, it was a complex process that involved both of the researchers at the same time. First of all, the researchers had to find the tram again, in Stormwind and in Ironforge, because each of them would be at one end of the tram. This process was pretty difficult because neither of the researchers had been to the tram a lot, so it took some time to look up where it was located and find it in the game. There was a person at each end of the subway, one at Stormwind and one at Ironforge, each player collecting data by asking travelers a few quick questions. This way, it could be seen which way the subway was used more. By having two people working on the research at the exact same time, the research was able to be recorded very exactly and precisely. When there were players to talk to, they were asked a few questions. The questions that were asked were if they knew where they were traveling to and why. It was also noted what each player's class, race

and level was in order to see if these different character aspects showed any correlations between one another and who rode the tram the most. Data was collected for three days from 7-7:30pm. At each of these time intervals, data was collected on however many players could be interacted with. It became difficult because there were at least four or five players – at each end of the tram – that ran off too quickly for the researchers to get any information about their travels on the tram. It was also difficult because players did not want to miss the tram because they were talking to the researchers so data had to be collected quickly. In the cases where players would completely ignore the researchers' questions, only the class, level and race of the character was collected.

Results

Not as much data was collected as the researchers expected because the characters that used the tram appeared to be in a hurry. They often ran off and did not answer the questions that the researchers asked them. However, the data collected was sufficient in order to interpret the research, because the data that was collected illustrated that players of mainly higher levels use the tram mainly for quick and free transportation when completing quests. The data also showed that humans and night elves were the most common races to use the subway; however the data did not show any relationship between tram use and class. It appeared that there were not any trends found relating to the race and class of the characters that used to tram. There were a variety of different types of races and classes that came into the station, but once again, no patterns can be seen. Especially considering the fact that humans are from Stormwind, there were not as many humans that came into the southern station near Stormwind. The same was the case with Ironforge, because not as many dwarves and gnomes used the northern station.

All of the research was collaborated and, the races that rode the tram from Ironforge to Stormwind were three humans, two knight elves, and one draenei. The classes that rode from Ironforge to Stormwind were one mage, two warriors, one hunter, one shaman, and one warlock. As seen from this, there is no correlation between the races and classes that use the tram from Ironforge to Stormwind. From Stormwind to Ironforge, the races that rode the tram were three dwarves, three knight elves, one draenei, and two humans. With classes, there were two death knights, two hunters, one rogue, one shaman, and three paladins. Once again, this shows there is no connection of who rides the tram the most from Stormwind to Ironforge. Overall, the data shows that knight elves and humans were the most abundant races using the tram and they tended to go both ways pretty evenly. However, it is ironic that no dwarves were traveling from Ironforge but there were three that traveled to Ironforge. Regarding classes, hunters, shaman, and paladins rode the tram the most. The hunters and shaman were distributed evenly on both ends because they came into both ends of the tram. However, paladins only rode from Stormwind to Ironforge.

The one thing that was noticed to have a relationship with the tram was the level of the characters who rode the tram in the data. The levels ranged from 12 to 80 in general. The characters that rode from Ironforge to Stormwind were many levels: one level 12, one level 33, one level 38, one level 44, and two level 80s. Going from Stormwind to Ironforge there was one level 13, one level 20, one level 21, one level 23, one level 63, one level 67, and two level 80s. Overall, this shows that most of the characters that rode the tram were of a higher level. Most of the characters were a level 20 and above, but there were two that were lower than that. Considering these numbers, it

shows that the four level 80s that rode the tram were distributed evenly based on which direction the tram goes.

The most important part of the research was to figure out why people rode the tram. As stated in the methods, it was difficult to get people to respond to the questions asked. There were only two people who took the time to talk to the researchers. The first person was very helpful and compliant and answered every question that was asked. When asked if he knew where he was going, he stated he did and that he was taking the tram to Stormwind. The other question asked was why he was traveling to Stormwind he answered with the simple reason, to complete a quest. Then the researchers asked him why he thought most other players used the tram. Some of the reasons that this player gave was that it is free, access to different dungeons, different quests, discover points, for fun, a way to get to Northrend, and there are things in Stormwind that are not in Ironforge. The other character that was talked to was asked why they were riding the tram. They stated in a simple answer that they ride the tram because it is less time consuming than flying.

Discussion

The data that was collected from this study was useful in answering the research question about whether or not there were trends among types of characters (class, level and race) that rode the deeprun tram; the data also demonstrated how there were specific reasons why players use the deeprun tram. First, it was found that while there were a variety of classes that rode the tram, the majority of players that rode the tram were either of the human race or the night elf race. Also, of the players that were observed riding the deeprun tram, there was a common trend among higher level players (starting at about level 12) and deeprun tram users. The data that was collected through interacting with

some of the deeprun tram users explained that the main reason players use this tram – besides the fact that it is free – is to get to other locations quicker in order to complete quests and find different dungeons.

From looking at the data there were not as many correlations as we had expected there to be. First of all, it was predicted that because humans are from Stormwind, they would be most likely to ride the deeprun tram from Stormwind to Ironforge; however, this was not the case at all. Also, it was predicted that most of the races that rode the deeprun tram from Ironforge to Stormwind would be dwarves and gnomes, since they are originally from Ironforge; once again the prediction was proved to be inconsistent with the data. This prediction was inconsistent with the data that was collected because the data shows that the most abundant races that ride the deeprun tram were humans and night elves, not the predicted dwarves and gnomes. Because bother of the researchers are beginners at the game, it was difficult to interpret why night elves and humans were the most abundant tram users, but it could possibly have something to do with their race having more quests and more tasks to complete than other races; but, this is just conjecture.

However, the data did not show any relationships between tram use and class, because out of all of the data that was collected, there was not enough information to discern whether or not specific classes were more likely than others to ride the deeprun tram. In this sense, the data proved to be adequate enough in order to understand some correlation between tram usage and character race, but the data was not sufficient enough to determine a parallel between tram usage and character class.

Another hypothesis that was made concerning this data was that mostly higher level characters would be using the deeprun tram. This was predicted because higher

level players are more knowledgeable about where they need to go in order to complete quests and other tasks. Higher level players also know more about the geography of the game and therefore will obviously know more about specific locations, such as places for quicker transportation between different locations. As predicted, higher level characters, 12 and above, were found most often using the deeprun tram. Fourteen players were found to be in this range and 11 of these 14 players were at a level higher than 20. It was also noticed that out of all of the players that the researchers interacted with and questioned, the only players that were responsive to the research questions were those that were of upper levels, such as level 80. In deciding a correlation between tram usage and character level, the data collected was very helpful. The data that described this correlation between level and usage of the tram also made sense because it revealed the fact that the tram is hard to find, and so most characters do not know about it unless they are of a higher level.

For the most part, it was discovered that the main reason players use the deeprun tram is for quick and easy transportation between Ironforge and Stormwind in order to complete quests faster. The deeprun tram is free to ride, unlike flying, and the tram is also much quicker than flying so if a player's destination is Ironforge or Stormwind, it makes sense that the deeprun tram would be chosen over flying. The deeprun tram is a useful resource for players in WOW to use because not only is it free, but it allows players to discover new places within Ironforge and Stormwind. It is logical that players use the deeprun tram as means of fast and easy transportation between Ironforge and Stormwind, because in the game of WOW the faster and more resourceful the player, the more beneficial the rewards can be. A player who is able to complete more quests quicker and

discover more places within the game, will be able to level quicker than some other players that might not know about the benefits of the deeprun tram.

Despite the fact that the data collected in this study was a lot less than what was expected, the results were still sufficient enough to interpret and analyze. Although there were some aspects of the research that could not be interpreted, the other data could be analyzed and was very efficient in deciphering specific connections between players and the deeprun tram. Despite the fact that the data collected from this study was very helpful in answering the research question about the deeprun tram, working in an environment such as the deeprun tram station, there were definitely some limitations. First, obtaining data was difficult because there were not as many players traveling through the tram as was expected and so a lot of time was spent just waiting. Also, many of the characters who would use the tram would run into the station and get on the tram pretty fast. This made it difficult to run after them and get the questions asked. The other thing that happened was a character would run into the station and stand on the platform waiting for the subway. The researcher would try to talk to the character waiting, but would often get ignored. At the same time, the tram would come almost immediately and the character would get on and leave.

Overall the data was efficient for the research conducted, even with the limitations that the research presented. The data that was collected from this study made sense and it could be interpreted clearly by the researches. It was very interesting to discover that some of the predictions for this study turned out to be incorrect, such as the fact that dwarves and gnomes were not the most abundant races that rode the deeprun tram, even though the two cities that the tram runs to are home to these races. It was also

interesting to learn that there was in fact a correlation between level and usage of the

tram, which shows that the game of WOW is a very skill based game, because the more

skillful a player, the more resourceful that player can be.

Reference Page

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