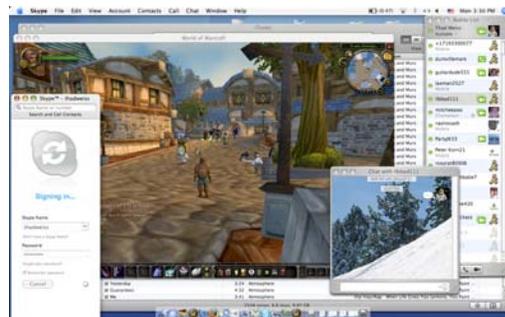


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World of Warcraft Gaming Habits

Introduction:

The purpose of this research paper was to explore the typical demographic of World of Warcraft players who multi-tasked while playing the game and to understand what the most popular activities were while playing the game. The research question revolved greatly around the concept that players can choose whether they want their gamer interface to occupy the entire computer screen or only a portion. As can be seen by the images below the Warcraft Interface can look much different depending on whether an individual multitasks or not. Of the players who chose to have the WoW screen take up only part of their computer face, the research looked at what other things these players were doing on their computer. Quantitative data was gathered to find the most popular activities among world of Warcraft players while playing the game along with the demographic and percentage of multitasking players. The first hypothesis of the research was that those who began playing World of Warcraft in the past 3 months would show a higher tendency to multitask while playing. The second hypothesis was that those who played over four hours a week would also have a higher tendency to multitask.



Materials and Methods:

Data for this experiment was gathered from surveys given out to all members of Writ 1133 World of Warcraft sections. An additional number of surveys were gathered by sending out the same questions to participants via facebook. A total of 26 surveys were gathered from the World of Warcraft writing class while 24 surveys were used from facebook responses. The survey had multiple questions including a players' level, age, gender and whether or not they multitasked while playing WoW. The participants were selected in order to give a more in depth look at the particular gaming habits of a specific age group. Of the participants the average level was 37.84 and average age was about 20. The survey was made up of 22% females and 78% males. One of the qualitative questions asked players to pick which activities they liked to do while playing the game from a list of six possible options. The activities included online shopping, surfing the web, downloading music, doing homework and accessing social site such as facebook. A final section titled "other" allowed participants to provide any additional activities not previously listed and was the only qualitative data of the research. Some of the questions from the survey were not used and merely served to limit variables among participants who answered the surveys such as players race. After gathering the data, the most common responses were compiled for what other activities people liked to do while playing. The purpose of this question was to further understand not only how many people multitasked but what they did. A general demographic of what percentage of players multi-tasked was also completed.

Results:

Percentage of players who multi-task:

The data gathered showed that an overwhelming number of people who play World of Warcraft multitask while doing so. Of the 50 participants only 5 players stated that they did not multitask while playing the game. The other 90% of those surveyed listed doing at least one other activity while playing. Participants who began playing in the past three months made up 46% of the sample (23 players), while participants who began the game before made up 54% (27 players). Of the people that did not multitask 3 of them had begun playing in the past three months while 2 had begun playing before. Of the 90% of players who multitasked 20 of them had begun playing in the past 3 months while 25 of them had begun playing the game before. This means that about 44.5% of the multitasking players began playing in the past three months while about 55.5% began playing before. There was also no noticeable patterns in hours spent playing a week within the group of multi tasking players. Below is a table that shows the number of hours a participant who multitasks plays per week.

Hours per week	1-2	2-4	4-6	6 or more
Number of players	14	11	10	10
Percent	31%	24.5%	22.25%	22.25%

The table shows that there is a rather even distribution of hours spent playing among gamers who multitask. The highest number of multitasking gamers (31%) play 1-2 hours a week. There is a tie for lowest as 22.25% of gamers play four to six and 22.25% play six hours or more a week. 24.5% of gamers surveyed played 2-4 hours a week.

Most popular things to do while playing

I found that the most popular activity was to browse social sites (at 60%) with Surfing the Web coming in close second at (56%). The least popular activity was to

online shop with only 18%. Of the participants that responded other, the most popular activities were listening to music (14%) and Instant Messaging (8%). In general there was a fairly even distribution among the other activities listed such as online shopping, downloading music, doing homework and other.

Below is a table of the percentage of players who did certain activities while playing

	Online shop	Surf the Web (i.e. YouTube, espn.com etc.)	Social sites (i.e. facebook, myspace etc.)	Download music, movies or TV shows	Homework	Other
Number of players	9	28	30	19	15	14
Percent	18	56	60	38	30	28

Discussion:

One major surprise of the research was that almost all of those surveyed would do other things while playing the game (90%). The first hypothesis that participants who began playing in the past three months would show a higher tendency to multitask was not supported. The study showed that 44% of participants who multitasked had begun playing in the past 3 months and 56% had begun playing before. Because there was such a thin margin between the two, there was no evidence to suggest a relationship between time spent playing and whether or not a player would multitask. There was also insufficient evidence to support the second hypothesis, that those who played over 4 hours a week would be more likely to multitask. Although 55% of those who multitasked played 4 hours or less a week as opposed to 45% who played more, the difference was too insignificant to fully support the hypothesis.

Although there was a large variety of hours players would spend online a week and whether they had started playing recently or not, almost all of the participants admitted to multitasking while playing. The data ended up showing that no matter a player's World of Warcraft experience or habits, they were extremely likely to multitask. I believe the major reason for the inconclusive results was due to the fact that the data was gathered almost exclusively from college-aged participants. As many studies have shown, current college students are of a generation that is known for juggling many activities at once, "Today's youth immerse themselves in media...the growth in the amount of media being used by young people is partially explained by their multi-tasking behavior" (Harris, 2004, 20). With all the different programs available on present day computers, it would make sense that a generation apt to multitasking would be unlikely to just play the game.

It should also be noted that although there were two activities that were popular among the majority of players who multitasked, social sites and browsing the web. There was also a fairly even distribution among other activities. 38% of participants downloaded music and movies, 30% did homework, 18% shopped online and 28% listed other activities. Because of the variety of activities players would do while playing, I believe the data would suggest that the high number of participants who multitasked was not due to one or two popular activities associated with the game, but Millennials affinity for multitasking. In regards to her study on family life through the University of California Los Angeles Elinor Oches stated,

We saw that when the working parent comes through the door, the other spouse and the kids are so absorbed by what they're doing that they don't give the arriving parent the time of day... The returning parent, generally the father, was greeted only about a third of the time, usually with a perfunctory "Hi." "About half the

time the kids ignored him or didn't stop what they were doing, multitasking and monitoring their various electronic gadgets. (Wallis, 2006)

In the case of World of Warcraft it seems that many people in the age group of the study use the game not only for entertainment but to add more human interaction to their online experience. The fact that such extensive multitasking on the computer can cause the user to be cut off from physical human interactions, it would make sense that the majority of multitasking participants showed a preference towards social networks (60%).

Limitations

The main limitation to the study that makes it difficult to understand the data is that most participants were of a certain age. A more complete set of data, with participants of all ages, would help us better understand if the phenomenon of multitasking while playing World of Warcraft is one that applies only to the generation in the study.

References

Geraci, John. Nagy, Judit. (2004) Millennials – the new media generation. *Advertising and Marketing to Children*. January -March 2004

Wallis, Claudia. (2006) The Multitasking Generation. *Time Magazine*, Retrieved 26 May 2009, from
<<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/printout/0,8816,1174696,00.html>>

Appendix

By completing the following questions, you are also granting consent for this information to be used as part of a research exercise that I am completing for my WRIT 1133 class. Your participation is completely voluntary. The information you provide may be used in a class project. While profile information may be included in my essay (i.e. your age, sex, class standing, etc.), your name will NOT be used.

WoW Survey

Gender:

Age:

Race (of character in the game):

Character Level:

1. When did you first start playing World of Warcraft? (Please circle one)

A. After enrolling in the World of Warcraft section of Writ 1133

B. Before enrolling in the World of Warcraft section of Writ 1133

2. About how many hours do you play WoW a week?

A. 1-2

B. 2-4

C. 5-6

D. 6 or more

3. If you do other things on your computer while playing WoW, what are the most common things you do?

Online Shop

Surf the Web (i.e. YouTube, espn.com etc.)

Social sites (i.e. facebook, myspace etc.)

Download music movies or TV shows

Homework

Other _____