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## **PvP vs. PvE**

The question for any experienced or beginning player when creating a character is which type of world to create your new character on. For the now over 11 million players of the World of Warcraft this decision has been made. But what makes people choose a PvP (Player vs Player) or PvE (Player vs Environment) server? I am going to walk us through some of the main reasons for player's world choices.

PvP servers are by nature a lot different places than a PvE world. One of the biggest and most notable differences is the fact that anyone can kill anyone from the other faction at any time. Now most PvPers I interviewed, loved the fact that this is possible. On the Blizzard forum a gamer commented, "The spontaneous fights just make the game more exciting overall, and it makes the game world feel more dangerous. Having random encounters like that make the game world seem more alive" (Blupin). Another commented, "PvP makes this game fun because it's hard to level when your always getting ganked" (Grandhorace). It is obvious that playing on a PvP server adds a level of difficulty and competition.

Nick Yee who has researched the World of Warcraft wrote a piece where he described his reasons for people playing the game. He talks about something called the Achievement Component. There are three parts of this component. First, advancement which is the desire to gain power and further your character. This is

very evident in a PvP server. Players strive to be the best in the game. But to be good in a PvP server one always has to be on their guard, and keeping up with items (Getting new and better items to stay competitive), since there is no safe place for a player to go. Players on a PvP server are forced to learn to survive on their own, which in turn makes players more apt to look out for only their characters advancement.

The second is mechanics, or having an interest in analyzing the game. This can be found on both a PvE and a PvP server, but in a PvP server there are situations where a player has to analyze a situation that's impossible to find in a PvE server. An example is raiding a large town. There is a lot of analyzing and planning that goes into raiding a large town, such as how the group will handle the guards of the city, the people of that faction, and how they plan to get away. Everything found in PvE can be done on PvP. However, not all PvP things can be done on a PvE server. For example on a PvE server it is impossible to log onto a high level 70 and go attack lower levels of the other faction (assuming the lower level doesn't agree to fight).

The third part is competition, or the desire to compete and challenge other players. One of the main draws to playing a PvP server is that you are always at the risk of being attacked. Competitive people enjoy this because they are always competing and trying to be the best. Melibourne, who commented on a blog says, "To me a lot of the reason behind it is that you need to be more aware of your surroundings at all times. Sounds nerve racking but makes things a lot more interesting". Melibourne just like many other players, main reason for playing the game is the difficulty and level of competition. As Viola said, "I personally, like to

play non-competitively. I have enough fights and competition during my average workday” (Viola). Clearly as a player who enjoys PvE more, Viola’s enjoyment of competition goes down.

The final point I would like to make is about the overall story line of the game. Faction pride is essential to the story line of the game. The whole story line behind the World of Warcraft revolves around the idea of good vs. evil, horde vs. Alliance. Without this faction pride the storyline of the game would make no sense. As Melibourne described, “Another thing that has struck me on the pvp server is the faction pride there which seems to lack a bit on the pve servers. It becomes almost like a home team atmosphere. I’ve been helped many times while being ganked on the pvp realm where as I have been passed up on the pve realm when needing help many times even when asking for it” (Melibourne). As a faction member on a PvP server, players often will have to deal with fighting off the other faction. This only adds to the competitiveness of a PvP server.

PvE servers or Player vs Environment are generally the same style of world as a PvP server, with some differences. Some of the main differences are when and where factions can attack each other, and difficulty in leveling as opposed to a PvE. Yee also described one of the reasons for playing WoW, as the Social Component. There are three parts to the social component as well. The first is Socializing, which is having an interest in helping and talking with other payers. Nineteen a player of the game said, “I enjoy PvE because I really enjoy having good friends that I can go do things with. For me the game is the most fun when I am around others working together”. In a PvP server there is so much competition and fighting, sometimes it is

harder to keep up with friends. The second part is relationships. For many players the main drive for playing the game is meeting and making friends. People who do not want to play this game by themselves are often times more likely to choose a world because of the friendship and social factor. Just like Nineteen, many players enjoy PvE for the relationships that are formed. However it is notable that people play PvP servers for this same reason.

The third reason given is teamwork. Especially at higher levels, working with a team is a must no matter what server the player is playing on. From Battlegrounds to Guilds teamwork is all over both types of servers. One of the biggest differences between a PvP and a PvE server however is that in a PvE server players can choose when and with who they want to work with in a team. In a PvP server, where players can always be attacked and killed, players are forced to work together simply to survive. PvP servers force people into situations that they may not want to be in, but have to work together to survive. The result, is that players are forced to think creatively and quickly. There is no time to waste planning out a strategy.

The question is then, which type of player will choose which type of world? I discussed earlier the main differences between the servers, but what kind of people choose the worlds?

Of the 7 in game interviews in a PvP world I completed, four of the seven players were under the age of 25. This leads me to believe that there is a larger quantity of younger people on PvP servers, because of the level of competitiveness. Younger more spontaneous people, are naturally drawn to a quicker more competitive server. Secondly people who want to play the game to its fullest will

tend to play a PvP world. Since the World of Warcraft is an expansion on the earlier games, a PvP server allows for the faction competition which is evident in all the earlier games. Finally people that play a PvP server, have to have better patience than a PvE player, simply because in a PvP server people will often times have their tasks interrupted by the other faction. It is harder to level a character in a PvP server, and people have to have the patience to level up to 70.

A PvE world will naturally, since the world is easier, and not as competitive, draw people who are more interested in questing and exploring the game, or as Yee said it the Immersion Component. Since there is no threat of the other faction killing you when ever they want, players on PvE servers can do things slower and at their own pace. Players do not have to be skilled in PvP on a PvE server to enjoy themselves and have fun. The level of competition goes down because of this on PvE servers.

The World of Warcraft is now the most popular online game ever. Due to its extensive detail, it is the most intricate and extensive online games. Players who play the game share many things in common no matter what type of server they choose (PvP or PvE). However the big differences between these two types of world, leads certain types of people to choose one or the other; some of the differences being, the level of competitiveness, social components, and game story. All people are different, and this is seen in the decision of what world players will begin their journey on.

**Bibliography:**

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**Glossary:**

Player vs. Player server (PvP)= Servers where factions can attack each other when ever.

Player vs. Environment server (PvE)= Servers where players cannot be attacked by the other faction when ever.

Faction= There are two factions one can choose between, Horde and Alliance. These two factions are against each other in the game.

Gank, getting ganked= When a player, usually of higher level, kills low level players for no reason.

Thunderbluff= A horde city

Battle Grounds= Places where Horde and Alliance can meet and fight against each other. Players must choose to enter a battleground, and once they have they can kill and be killed by the other faction.

Raiding= A group of a certain faction, working together to achieve a common goal (i.e. attack a horde/alliance town).