

Why Do You Play World of Warcraft?

1. Survey Information

The survey will take around 30 minutes. You can stop and come back at a later time by using "Exit Early" link. To come back, use the same survey links again and just ensure you use the same computer and don't erase your cookies in the interim. As a reward, at least three codes that can be redeemed in-game for either a Blizzard store pet or loot from a trading card game will be given away via a random drawing. Details on entering (completely optional) appear at the end of the survey.

The data collected will only be used by Michelle A. Hoyle for her research studies. Data from each individual will be combined with that of others, so you cannot be identified as a specific individual. No personally identifiable data, such as your real name, phone number, character name, or even your IP address, is required or will be stored with the survey except an optional e-mail address for follow-up questions or future surveys. All data on this form will be stored on SurveyMonkey's computers until shortly after the survey closes on April 18, 2010. Data collected may be published, but your individual privacy will be completely maintained.

This is a multi-page, three-part survey. Unless otherwise indicated, all questions are required.

In order to progress through this survey, please use the following navigation links:

- Click the "Next" button to continue to the next page.
- Click the "Previous" button to return to the previous page.
- Click the "Exit Early" button if you need to exit the survey and come back later.
- Click the "Done" button to submit your survey.

If you have any questions, you can contact Michelle on Twitter ([@Eingang](#)) or by e-mail using the survey's e-mail address of wow.learning AT sussex.ac.uk.

If you didn't arrive at this survey from the WoWLearning.org site, you should read the [general survey information sheet](#).

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2. Informed Consent

I understand that:

- my participation in this study is voluntary;
- I can choose not to participate in part or all of the study; and
- I can withdraw at any stage of the study without being penalized or disadvantaged in any way.

By pressing the 'Next' button, I am confirming:

- I have read the survey information on the previous page;
- I have read the [general survey information](#) on the WoWLearning site;
- I am at least 18 years of age; and
- I am consenting to participate in the study.

If you have any questions, you can contact Michelle on Twitter (@Eingang) or by e-mail using the survey's e-mail address of wow.learning AT sussex.ac.uk.

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3. Part 1: WoW Details (The Easy Part)

Some basic information about what you do in World of Warcraft and how long you've been doing it.

- * 1. How long have you been playing WoW (to the nearest half year)? If you played in the public or closed beta, you can count that too.

Example: I started playing in the EU public beta, so I've been playing since December 2004. That's 5.5 years.

- * 2. The following are questions about characters you play or have played. It may be that they all end up referring to the same character or one you've already described. Please just re-enter the values again. For the number of days played, round up the closest number.

Example: Elsheindra, a Night Elf Druid Healer, was my first character. I may have DPSed a little, but I was primarily a healer. Her played time is 252 days, which rounds up to 255 days.

Hint: Typing “/played” in game will give you the number of days played for your current character.

	Race	Class	Role	How many days did you play that character?
Tell us about the first character you created.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Tell us about the character on which you currently spend most of your time.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Tell us about the character you enjoy playing the most.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

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- * 3. The next choices relate to the type of game realm where you play. If you play on more than one, pick the realm used by the character on which you spend the most time.

Example: Elsheindra plays on EU-Thunderhorn which is a Player versus Environment (PvE) server, located in Europe.

	Realm Type	Realm Location
What kind of realm do you play on and where is it located?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

- * 4. Do you have a favourite profession in the game?

Example: Elsheindra loves to collect herbs, even if it is a dangerous hobby.

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alchemy | <input type="checkbox"/> Herbalism | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blacksmithing | <input type="checkbox"/> Inscribing | <input type="checkbox"/> Skinning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Enchanting | <input type="checkbox"/> Jewelcrafting | <input type="checkbox"/> Tailoring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Leatherworking | <input type="checkbox"/> No favourite profession |

- * 5. How much time per week in hours do you estimate that you spend on average in game? If it's more than 40, choose that from the menu and enter the number of hours into the short comment field provided.

Example: Elsheindra usually spends 3 nights a week raiding (3 hours each) and another hour or so on a guild meeting. Add in another 2 hours for social bits here and there. That makes about 12 hours a week as an estimate.

<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>

- * 6. In a short sentence (140 characters), describe the primary purpose of the guild in which you spend most of your time, or enter "no guild".

Example: I'm in a social guild that believes in random acts of kindness. We love to dance but we also raid end-game content with other casual guilds.

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4. Part 2a: Why I Play World of Warcraft

For this section, I'm going to ask you to read a short article on why I play WoW and then ask you to write something about why you play. This is likely to take some time, so you might like to exit and come back later to complete it.



Elsheindra (me)

Hello, my name is Michelle Hoyle. By day, I'm a respectable Open University course author, associate lecturer, and course presentation chair. At night, I assume my secret identity: Elsheindra, night elf guild mistress of [The One](#) on a European World of Warcraft (WoW) server. You're probably thinking that massively multiple online role playing games (MMORPGs), like WoW, are just for kids. In fact, according to research, only about 20% of WoW players are between the ages of 12 to 19. That means some 80% of players are solid, upstanding citizens of the world. They could be your tutors. They could be your next door neighbours. They could be that person you see walking down the street or buying beef at the butcher's. World of Warcraft, as of May 2009, was holding steady at 11.5 million active subscribers. That's over 60% of the online gaming market. It's the most successful personal computer game ever to be released.

What is it that compels these people to spend around 20 to 24 hours a week in a virtual world? Is it the killing? Is it the girls? Is it the beautiful scenery? Is it the fantastic fashions? People's motivations vary, so I can't give you a universal motivation, but I can reveal something about why I play. I play for three reasons: because I'm a community builder, because I'm a teacher, and because I love to help people. They're all a bit related. I have spent my life bringing people together and helping them form cohesive, long-lasting communities. It started back in the 1980s with electronic bulletin boards and continues today with World of Warcraft. That's why I run a guild and co-lead an alliance of guilds.

A guild in World of Warcraft is a collection of people who share things in common. The game gives them some tools for sharing, like a shared chat area, calendar, and a bank in which to store money or items for common use. They usually share a philosophy. My guild, for example, is a social guild with a philosophy of doing random acts of kindness. An allied guild is composed of people together for friendship or fun. When my guild members aren't out being kind to the other 4000 people on the server, they have each other to group with on small tasks, called quests, like curing sick deer or ridding an area of nasty rabid bears. A guild is also a pool of people with which to go on longer adventures in groups of five for rewards like armour and gold in mazelike environments where there are obstacles to overcome and difficult, large monsters to kill—so-called dungeons. The alliance of guilds I help lead allows smaller social-minded guilds like mine to be able to participate in even larger, more complex adventures that require 10, 25, or 40 people at a time. It is very rewarding to be in a position to enable people to have fun, but at the same time promote learning of important social interaction and problem solving skills.

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Where does the learning come from? The learning is, in fact, everywhere in the game. Those 5-person dungeon groups or the larger 25-person groups require leaders to decide on strategy and direct the other people with varied motivations. Some people go to these dungeons only to get better gear. That's their motivation. Other people go for the feeling of accomplishment in participating in something difficult. When people are there for gear, there can be clashes over who should get it, which requires good interpersonal relationship skills and diplomacy on the part of the group leader. In our guild alliance, we've had leaders good at strategy and telling people what to do but with terrible interpersonal skills. That made their adventures not very fun, so people were reluctant to participate. Likewise, running a successful guild over a long period of time requires all manner of leadership and diplomacy skills. WoW is a safe, low-risk environment in which to learn these things and they can transfer into real-world rewards.



Elsheindra as a healing tree

In order to contribute to a team effectively, people need to learn to play their characters well. Each character has specific abilities. Elsheindra, my character, is a druid healer. She cures people of diseases and poisons and heal their bodies of damage they have taken while fighting. I've specialized in being a healer for over four years. I've become really, really good at healing by dint of lots of practice and much analysis of how things work. I have pride in my abilities and I love being able to help people in the game in a non-violent fashion, because I was not much interested in hacking and slashing at things. Other people are extremely interested in effectively killing things and devote hours outside of the game to reading about their character's role and how to improve on it, often in very tiny increments. I'm very willing to share my knowledge and experience with other people and often other very good players are too.

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Basil, my partner

I've told you a lot about what kinds of things I do in World of Warcraft and my initial motivations. What I haven't told you are the things I've gained: love, acceptance, friendship, and a Ph.D. project, in order of importance. I'm currently researching what elements in games like WoW contribute to motivation and whether or not that can be transferred effectively into distance learning. Both feature activities that are a lot of work and, let's face it, aren't fun. In World of Warcraft, though, people persist with these difficult, not-fun tasks. I know I've persisted in some things because of the friends I've made. Those friendships have even transcended the virtual world, with people helping me move from apartment to apartment multiple times, even though they live in a different city.

The alliance of guilds I co-run just had a real-life adventure at Bletchley Park and a BBQ at my house afterwards, one of several such successful large-scale events over the years. It's also not uncommon for some of my guildmates to just come and visit from other parts of the UK or from other countries. One of my guildmates even came along from Denmark to Canada for the summer. Are we just strange misfits? That's a common perception of gamers. I don't

fit in lots of places but in WoW there's a place for me, as there is for them, and it's not just because "on the Internet nobody knows you're a dog". Finally, "Basil", my real-life partner, is someone I met in WoW because he was helping me co-lead the alliance of guilds. We've been together for over two and a half years. We still play WoW together on a regular basis, although not 20 some hours a week. There's nothing like a romantic date night with your beloved and 23 other friends.

WoW is like a fairy tale: magic, dragons, true love, fashion, elves, and orcs; but it's also what I've made of it: a place to be myself and to do the things I love to do.

Why do you play?

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5. Part 2b: Why You Play WoW (The Hard Part)

Now that you've read my blurb about why I play World of Warcraft, I'd like you to take some time to think about why you play World of Warcraft.

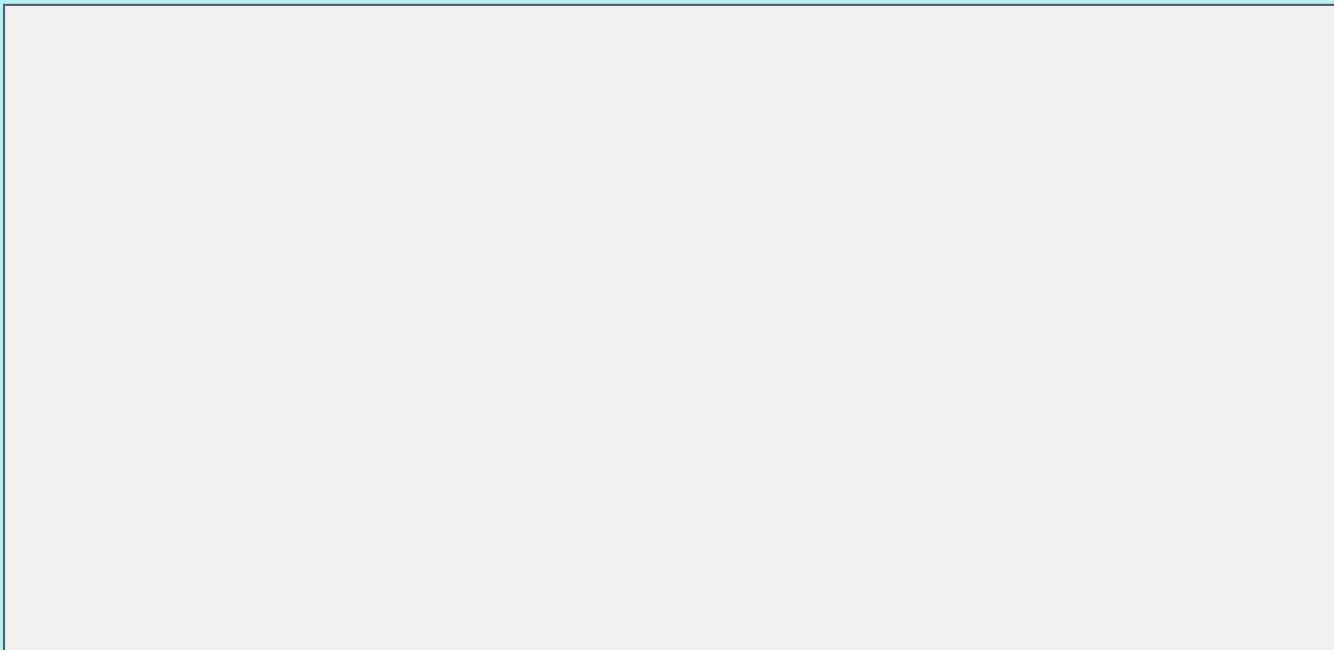
Remember: Provided that you're using your own computer, you can save your responses so far by using the "Exit Early" link and then come back.

Hint: You may find it easier to open up Notepad or something similar and compose your response in there, saving it periodically to your computer. Then break it up into chunks and paste it into the boxes. Each box holds 2000 characters (limitation of the survey tool), but I've provided you with 3 boxes.

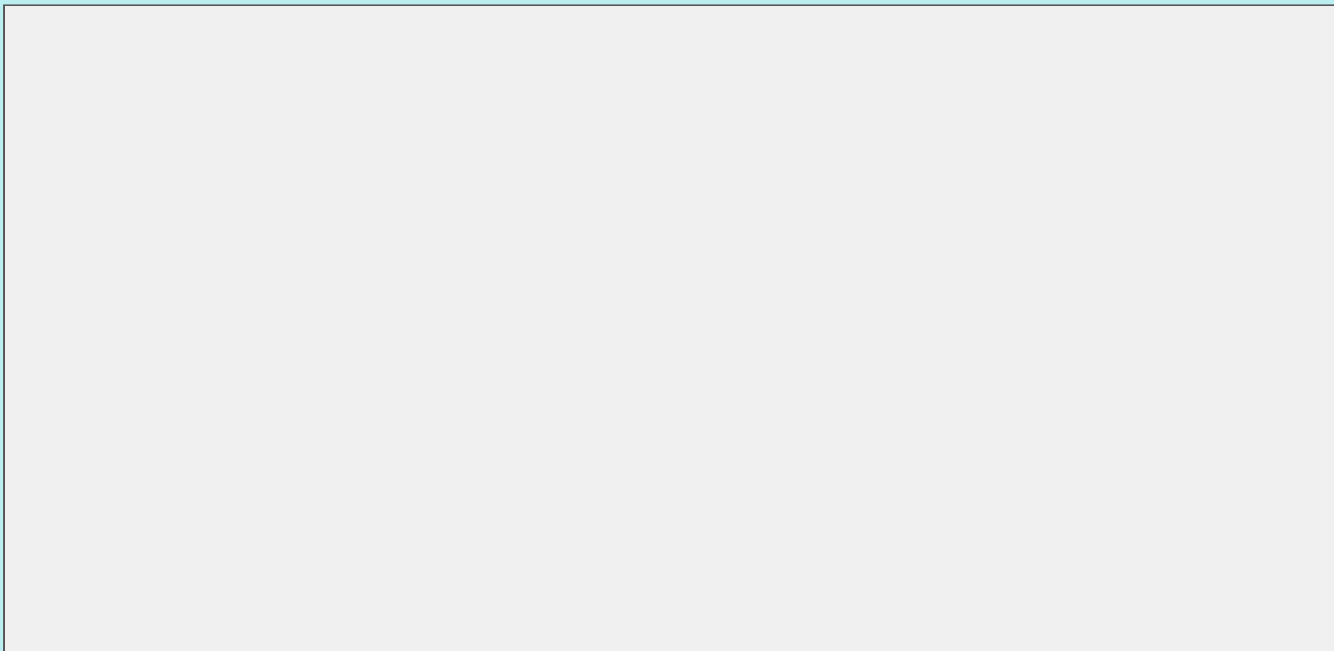
- * 1. Now that you've read why I play WoW, write at least a few paragraphs from your own point of view. Why do you play World of Warcraft?

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2. If you didn't finish your answer in the previous text box, please continue here. Just leave it blank otherwise.



3. Continue here if you're still not done.



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6. Part 3: Information About You

This final section gathers some general information about you as a person to answer questions like "How many 20-year-olds spend more than 50 hours per week playing?".

* 1. Are you male or female?

Female

Male

* 2. In what year were you born?

Example: 1952

* 3. In which country do you currently live?

Example: United Kingdom

* 4. What is your nationality?

Example: Canadian

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7. Last Bit: Contact You?

1. If you're happy to be contacted with any queries about your responses for this survey or to participate in future surveys, you can leave an e-mail address. This will be associated with your survey responses.

Queries About My Answers

Future Surveys

I am happy to be contacted if you have:

Your E-Mail Address

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8. Thanks!

I know this survey took some effort to complete. I greatly appreciate your time in helping me get my research started. Subsequent surveys will be a lot shorter.

Contact Details

If you have any questions or concerns about this survey, feel free to contact me, Michelle A. Hoyle, using wow.learning@sussex.ac.uk. Or you can contact Dr. Judith Good (J.Good@sussex.ac.uk), my project supervisor.

If you're interested in my research, this project has its own web site at <http://wowlearning.org/> or you can follow me on Twitter (@Eingang).

You're All Done!

You have now completed the survey. To submit your answers and get your personal prize code for entering the optional pet draw, please click the "Done" button below.

Thanks!

Michelle A. Hoyle
Elsheindra (EU-Thunderhorn)
@Eingang on Twitter