



## VOICES FROM THE COMBAT ZONE: GAME GRRLZ TALK BACK

From Justine Cassell and Henry Jenkins (eds.) [Barbie to Mortal Kombat: Gender and Computer Games](#) (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998).

*Compiled by Henry Jenkins*

Barbie doesn't live here anymore!

If 1997 became the "year for girls," in the games industry, much as Brenda Laurel and others had predicted, then, by year's end, another set of voices were being heard who also claimed to speak for girls and also sought to address what they wanted from digital media. Webpages are appearing which reflect the still nascent game girls movement. The game girls are older than those being targeted by Purple Moon, Girl Games, and the others, and certainly more self-confident than those who are described in their audience research. They have never felt left out of the digital realm and they take pleasure in beating boys at their own games, sometimes using their own Gameboys. They don't want a "ROM of their own"; they simply want a chance to fight it out with the others. Their voices are 90s kinds of voices - affirmative of women's power, refusing to accept the constraints of stereotypes, not those generated by clueless men in the games industry or those generated by the girls game researchers. These female gamers are bluntly questioning the assumptions being made by the girls game movement and asserting their own pleasures in playing fighting games like Quake. These women are also demanding to be taken seriously by the games industry, questioning the gender stereotypes at the roots of existing games, and standing up for the rights of their younger sisters to have access to the computer. In this next section, we will reprint several editorials by female gamers which appeared on the web in late 1997 and early 1998, offering a snapshot of an emerging subculture, which commands the attention of anyone interested in gender and games. We've chosen to let them speak last to suggest that the debates this book has documented are far from over.

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### **BUT ... GIRLS DON'T DO THAT!**

By Stephanie Bergman from Game Girls

A few days ago, I was sitting on the subway, heading uptown. It's a local...a really dreary ride, stopping every few minutes. A bunch of school kids got onto the train, probably about 8 years old, shepherded by their teachers. Now, I love children. But on subways? I hate children, or more specifically,

I hate the parents/baby-sitters/teachers who let the kids climb all over everything in sight, including the nearest person (me).

So I tried to ignore them, read my book in peace, when I hear someone start talking about "Super Mario" and "Nintendo 64." I look up, and five boys are huddled around the pole in front of me, discussing the relative merits of the Nintendo joystick with the annoying thumb thingy (they loved it. I hate it). The girls are gathered in the corner for the most part, but, looking over, I see one girl watching the boys' conversation as closely as me. She slowly began making her way over to them, step by step, ignoring the strange looks the other girls were giving her.

Finally, with one big step, she walked over to the pole, and asked the boys "Do you have Sony Playstation?" Four of the boys flat out ignored her and continued their Nintendo talk. But the fifth boy turned to her and said no. She began rambling about how great Playstation is, and how Tomb Raider is the best game, getting into a pretty intense (for an 8 year old) conversation with the boy.

The boy's friends notice him talking to (ew!) a girl, and ask him 'what is he doing?' The boy tells his friends, "She has a Playstation."

One of the friends stares at the girl, and asks, "Yeah, but do you have a Nintendo 64?" The girl (and here's where I began to laugh out loud, despite my attempts not to) looks at the boy, and with the greatest smirk, told him "Nintendo 64's are for babies. Playstation. Tomb Raider. Kill things, not jump on things." Another little boy asked, "What about that Barbie game?"

The girl rolled her eyes (I swear, it's only in New York that little kids can be THAT obnoxious...and no, that's not a good thing) and replied "Barbie's not a game." And with that, she flipped her hair, and walked back over to her girlfriends, who huddled around her, giggling, asking her what she had been doing talking to (ew!) boys.

After the kids got off the train, I was able to laugh in peace.

What I found the most surprising about what I'd witnessed, was the games referred to. The boys were talking about racing (Andretti, I think?), and Mario 64. The girl was talking about Tomb Raider, bucking all stereotypes right on their face.

What Purple Moon and other 'girlie games' companies have to understand is that although there is a market for games like Barbie Fashion Designer, there is just as big a market for girls who like to do the same things the boys do. There is nothing wrong with a little girl who enjoys a first person shooter game. The little girl on the train was right. Barbie's not really a game. You point, click, do all sorts of things, but where's the competition? Where's the adrenaline rush of WINNING? It's not there. Because "girls don't like that."

Well, guess what? We sure do! Little girls like the one I saw on the train are the "great untapped market" that these companies should be shooting for. Let the future fashion designers of the world, male or female, have their

Barbie. I have nothing against the game. In fact, I'm sure I would have loved it as a kid myself. The 'girl games' companies have their place, they really do. But I think as long as they refuse to acknowledge that they're only making 'games' to satisfy SOME little girls, they're enforcing a stereotype. Little girls like the one I saw are becoming more and more commonplace. Why did she pick Tomb Raider to play instead of, say, Final Fantasy? Maybe because of Lara. Or maybe because, as she put it, it just "is killer." We need to have companies making games for children, not for girls.

As a kid, I loved Pac Man. I loved Ms. Pac Man even more. Not because she was female, but because the gameplay was better (I still think so, actually). Pong, while I think everyone played it at sometime or another as a child, had it's moments, but overall, it was boring (apologies to all those Pong lovers out there). Space Invaders had me sitting in front of the television for hours. In a way, I almost think gaming was better for girls back then. Games were games. No girl games, no boy games. The concept of 'girl games,' on its face, is detrimental to the little girls who game. It's because companies are creating games "for girls" that the boys had such a hard time understanding how this girl could be playing something other than Barbie.

I can only hope that someone from the girl game companies sees what I saw, a little girl, trying to make the boys understand that she liked something other than Barbie. One little boy accepted her. The others laughed. There is nothing wrong with her loving Tomb Raider (as much as I hate Lara), and fortunately, she knew that. But how many little girls are pushed away from playing it in favor of the games meant for girls? How many mothers buy their daughters the girlie games instead of a more 'male' game? Yes, the mere fact that little girls are playing games is good. But pushing them into a certain type of game based on sex itself is a dangerous trend, one that other areas are getting out of. Women are doctors, women are lawyers. Fifty years ago, girls were taught not to even consider either profession. Now, we're teaching girls that "these are their games," and "these are the boys' games." We're teaching these girls to see things based on their gender. Which is exactly what we're trying to avoid. People are people, right? Then why is it suddenly so acceptable to split little children up based on gender alone when it comes to games??

THINK before you tell your daughter "that's a boys' game." THINK before you tell your son, "but that's for girls." It starts with games. Where does it end? I'm worried that it's back where we started fifty years ago

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## **GRRLS & GAMING ON ABCNEWS**

by Nikki Douglas from Grrl Gamer

I have nothing against Brenda Laurel (from Purple Moon software, a maker of games specifically designed for young girls) and the other women who were recently quoted in the ABC NEWS NIGHTLINE feature that recently aired about Girls and Gaming, but some of their quotes (not to mention some

of the bon mots from John Romero, but I'll get to that later), had me reaching for the virtual airsickness bag.

Let me take them head on:

"Girls' objection to computer games isn't what you'd expect. It's not that they're too violent, it's that they're too boring. They're extremely bored by them."

-Brenda Laurel, Purple Moon Software

What exactly is boring about creative strategy and 3D virtual environments? What is boring about figuring out how to decimate nasty aliens that have taken our planet hostage? How is that boring? What about adventure games like Tomb Raider and Blade Runner? Is it boring to be part of a story that unfolds and asks questions about our humanity and empathy?

Boring to jump across a ledge where there is a bear waiting to eat you? I'll tell you what boring is - it was waiting for those little cakes to come out of the EZ Bake oven. It was trying to get Barbie to stand in those high heels. It was the fact that Ken was not anatomically correct. It was going to Child World at Christmas to pick out toys for Santa to bring us and my brother always got the coolest ones - like the Star Trek Enterprise that I coveted one year. That was the year I got the Barbie townhouse. But I really loved Star Trek. I really wanted to have the Enterprise. All I got was Barbie and the Townhouse with the elevator and my Mom saying to me, but Star Trek is for boys, Barbie is for girls. Isn't this a cute little outfit?

"We find that a lot of male gamers are playing games like Quake and Duke Nuke 'Em, where you basically get on and you shoot lots of monsters. It's a good way to relieve stress. Whereas women who are playing games I think are more interested in achieving goals. They like to figure out that they've solved a problem or they've done something."

- Charlotte Panther, News Editor, Computer Gaming World

Lord knows we, as women, don't need to relieve stress. We just go shopping or eat or color code our underwear drawers, right? And I want all my gaming to be about achieving goals, just like my life is, not some escape. Oh, no, why would I want to temporarily escape all the stress and problem solving that I'm faced with every day? Why would I just once like to answer some insipid question like "I thought you were going to make dinner?" with a spray of automatic gunfire? There's your dinner, baby!

I think Charlotte just didn't want anyone to think she was, you know, one of those tough computer geek girls or something. "OK, I'm on ABCNEWS, my hair looks good, but I don't want to appear too butch, too Ellen." Personally Char, I think kicking alien ass is doing something.

"The Web and the Internet are about community, collaboration, who can form consensus. Those are the skills you need. And these are skills that women bring to the table."

- Sherry Turkle, MIT

Yawwwwnnn. Community and collaboration are what women bring to the table? God, that is so 1950's, so Retro, so family and hearth and Donna Reed. We're good little community makers and collaborators. We don't ever really do anything ground breaking, just create nice little places to live and work and raise our babies! That's what women are good at! If we work together we can all be friends. Well, screw that! I don't want to be friends! I want to be King! That's right, King, Hail to the King, baby! I want all the best stuff and I want it all for me and I will knock the hell out of anyone who tries to take a piece of my action. Not very community driven and collaborative, am I?

"One interesting statistic at AOL is women tend to use email 32 percent more than males. And when I look at the rest of my life, you know, and the patterns I see around me, that's not really surprising. In most households, you know, the woman mails the birthday card, the woman writes the thank you notes and that behavior translates online."

- Katherine Borsechnik, AOL

Shoot me if I ever write anyone a freakin' thank you note. This statement really grates on me. Basically ol' Kath here believes that these are not surprising roles for women, to be caregivers, sending birthday cards, cheerful emails and thank you notes. Instead of challenging this and saying email has been great, because we can keep in touch with people and get more work done (that's what I use it for), the thing it's best used for is the same mundane things I'm expected to do just because I'm a woman. Well, surprise, Kath, you aren't getting a birthday card from ME this year! I'm too busy using my email for work to just gab in the coffee clatch with all the other Ladies who have nothing better to do.

"Men tend to surf around. It's more like, you know, men with the channel changer, whereas women want everything in one place. So you have to make it very simple. And it's not because women are more simple creatures. It's just they want things very well organized. They want it laid out cleanly and clearly and they want, when, they want a label to mean what it says."

- Joy Every, AOL

AOL is a great place to apparently find women who are quite content in their little stereotypical roles. I'd just as soon as knock him out than relinquish the clicker, OK? I don't want everything in one place! How can you make a statement like that, that women want everything in one place? That's one of the most unbelievable generalizations I've ever heard. Then she slips and says it has to be simple and then backpedals by saying it's not because women are simple creatures, just more organized. Well maybe Joy is, but I sure as hell am not, and neither are most of the women I know. Some are, true. Like, my

Mom is very organized. She is the Queen of organization. But she's also extremely anal-retentive. She doesn't like computers and asks me all the time, how can I remember where everything is in my email In-box which

has over 10,000 emails? I just say, because I know who sent me what and when. She would end up filing all of them and I'd never remember which file they were in.

"It's a problem that little boys like to play games that slaughter entire planets. It's not particularly a problem just of the computer culture."

-Sherry Turkle, MIT

Maybe it's a problem, Sherry, that little girls DON'T like to play games that slaughter entire planets. Maybe that's why we are still underpaid, still struggling, still fighting for our rights. Maybe if we had the mettle to take on an entire planet, we could fight some of the smaller battles we face everyday. Women are not Men and Men are not Women but all Women are not members of the doily of the month club either.

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## THE CASE FOR SHERRY'S ARGUMENT

"Men design games for themselves because they understand what they know is fun. They don't understand what women find fun."

- John Romero

So what do you think a date with John Romero is like? Bass fishing? A couple of hours at the shooting range? A case of beer and ESPN?

Here's a suggestion for all game makers out there: Women like action and adventure games. Get used to it. Sell them to us. Make more money. It's as simple as that.

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## THIS GIRL WANTS GAMES

by Aliza Sherman, Cybergrrl.

I got to sleep really late last night. But it wasn't work that kept me in the office. It wasn't insomnia that kept me awake. I was playing a computer game. And not your usual Tetris, mind you. I was playing a multi-user, networked game called Carmageddon. I think the name says it all, but for those who don't know, I'll elaborate. Fast, wicked cars, elaborate maneuvering around impossible terrain, and gory, bloody hit and runs that leave roadkill in their wake. What's a nice grrl like me doing playing a violent, graphic game like this? It's fun!

Ever since I was in school, I loved arcade games. First it was pinball, then Space Invaders, Asteroids, Pac-Man and Ms. Pac-Man, and then I discovered my niche with Defender, the intergalactic "shoot 'em up" game that ate up most of the rolls of quarters my mom sent me at college for laundry. I was hooked.

In video arcades, I found that I had an aptitude for the games that took a degree of hand/eye coordination and the ability to work small buttons

quickly. Who knew how handy my typing lessons could be? I'd spend hours playing Millipede and Galaga, promising myself that I'd stop playing if I got a higher score the next game. But of course, if I got a higher score, I'd just have to play "one more game" to see if that last high score was a fluke or if I could consistently make a better score.

Looking at the games on the market today for girls, I get a little concerned. Where are the games that teach them competitiveness? Assertiveness? And that take advantage of a female's natural hand/eye coordination? I think as a society, we have a big taboo against strong women and a greater fear of women as warriors. Instead of making fashions with Barbie, why can't girls have a shoot 'em up game such as a Western based on Annie Oakley, or a fantasy rough and tumble game based on Xena, or a scary, evil "stab them in the heart with a "stake" game based on Buffy the Vampire Slayer? Or how about a "Glass Ceiling" game for women where they can take an array of automatic weapons to oppressive corporate offices?

I keep reading about articles and studies where experts say girls don't like shooting and blasting games but instead, prefer quiet, contemplative games with well-rounded characters and storylines that stimulate their imagination. I'd venture to say, however, that these studies are a reflection of how we condition girls to be passive. The image of woman with gun is too shocking, too disruptive and threatening to the male dominant order of things.

Do I think violent video games for girls will change the way we view aggression in females? Will they cultivate a strength in girls or women? Will they positively influence women's role in society? Well, no. But I do think a good "blow them to bits" computer game is not a bad thing for girls. And I know I'm not the only grrl that thinks so.

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## WHY GAMEGIRLZ?

by Aurora for Game Girlz

My parents just don't quite understand. They do try though. Two years ago for Christmas they stopped sending me peach bubble bath and sent the number one selling Mac game. They were so excited about finding a gift I would love, that I still haven't had the heart to explain the Mac/PC thing and why to this day I still haven't played the game. My female friends think I'm a geek-freak. My male friends sit down on the LAN with me and try to kick my ass.

C'est la vie!

It wasn't until the beginning of Quake and the online playing that I actually realized that there were other female gamers out there, and that I wasn't the only little girl who, once upon a time, had a hard time explaining to her friends why playing Dolphin on the Atari was so much more fun than dressing Barbie up in a very sleek new sparkly dress. Online gaming has brought me hundreds of new friends, both male and female who all share a love of fragging, slaying and taking over worlds.

GameGirlz is something I have wanted to do for a very long time. Not to push females and say we're better (that certainly isn't the case), but to show people there are many female gamers in the world and to give those girlz a place on the net where they can get information, reviews and resources. Plain and simple. What a girl wants out of a game is different than what a guy wants, and what each wants to see in a game is just as different. When I looked around at all the gaming related sites online, I found one thing lacking. There was very little input from females in the industry and female gamers.

The other issue I wanted to address with this site is the "nature" of the content that is available. The majority of girls I talked to, didn't find the games related content on other sites that they were interested in. I have taken all the "Have you seen this anywhere?" and "Where can I find out how to do this?" e-mail female gamers have sent me over the past year and included it in GameGirlz.

Over the next couple weeks I will be looking at setting up online tourneys, chat areas and providing a place where genderless log-ins aren't needed. We also have female Quake and Warcraft "tutors" coming aboard and lots more fun and exciting things. If you can offer suggestions, insights, help or feedback on GameGirlz, by all means hit the e-mail link on the bottom of this page. The more feedback I get, the more I can work towards providing the things you want to see and know about.

GameGirlz is not just me. It is a network of MANY male and female gamers who have an interest in online gaming and who think we grrlz needed a few more resources. I'm just the one who tries to put it all together. My wonderful on line (and off line) friends contributed a lot to this site. The staff of Planet Quake also spent a lot of time helping me get GameGirlz up and running. So, thank you to everyone who helped me get what I needed to do GameGirlz and to all the wonderful people who took time out of their busy schedules to do interviews. Also, thank you to the folks who stopped by to check out GameGirlz.

Cheers & Happy Fragging!

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## THE IMAGE OF A FEMALE GAMER

by Aurora for Game Girlz

"but... girls shouldn't be gamers... they are supposed to be Horse-Riders and Doll Fans!"  
[Quoted from e-mail sent to GameGirlz]

Somebody needs to point him in the direction of the 1900's I think...

The sad thing is, with today's computer games market overflowing with "games created for girls" full of things like dolls, make-up, boys and fashion, this kind of theory is common. When you add that to the image of the beautiful, sexy, no-brains bimbo chick the computer gaming industry likes to

promote... it's no wonder people look at me funny when I say I play games like Quake and Dark Reign.

I ran across a Wired article by Janelle Brown, where spokeswoman Bridget Massey of Attitude Networks, is quoted assaying "Modeling is something all female teens are interested in." I love that quote. Just like all female teens are interested in modeling, all young girls are interested in games about make-up and all women are interested in fashion and beauty. I personally couldn't care a less what the hottest color for summer wear is and I don't run out to buy the latest edition of Seventeen so I can find out if there is a 33.8% chance my boyfriend is cheating on me.

Like many other women gamers out there, I dislike the image of females that many software companies have set. This image is a topic I have discussed at length with many of the women (both game players and women working in the industry) who sent me e-mail about this site. In the eyes of the computer gaming industry, if you are a young girl, your only interests are boys and make-up. If you are an adult female, you wear leather and a bra big enough to double as a dust cover for your monitor.

Computer gaming companies need to market their games to the majority of the consumers. If that targeted audience consisted of a wide margin of adult males with a tiny percentage of females, I could understand the portrayal of the bimbo fantasy chick image. In saying that, I think many computer games companies need to take a second look at that targeted group and see how it has changed over the past year.

I'd like to quote the most recent and valid statistics I have found to date: 72% of game players are over 18, and of those half are over 35. Forty percent of PC gamers and 27% of console gamers are women. Video games are no longer the domain of teenage boys. (IDSA)

Cheers & Happy Fragging!

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## **LARA CROFT, FEMALE ENEMY NUMBER ONE?**

by Cal Jones, Reviews Editor for PC Gaming World

When it comes to weight and body image, most women are pretty insecure. Show me a woman who is happy with the size of her thighs and I'll show you a rarity. Much of the blame for this has been put on the media and its portrayal of women - ultrathin models who live on a diet of Marlboro Lights and coffee, actresses who have their own personal trainer and enough time to work out for four hours a day and heiresses who can afford cosmetic surgery, figure enhancing designer togs and celebrity hairdressers... These are not realistic role-models for women who work eight or more hours a day or have children to bring up, yet we feel pressured into looking like them.

The bad news is that womankind has met an even more dangerous foe. She isn't a supermodel or a movie star - she isn't even real. No. This threat comes in the form of a silicon chick - none other than the Tomb Raider herself,

Lara Croft.

The problem with Lara is that she was designed by men for men. How do I know this? Because Lara has thin thighs, long legs, a waist you could encircle with one hand and knockers like medicine balls. Show that to a guy and although he may not admit it (since he suspects it may be sad to fancy a character in a game), deep down he finds Lara pretty sexy. Show that to a woman and she will complain that Lara is anatomically impossible. Which is true, because if you genetically engineered a Lara-shaped woman, she would die within around 15 seconds since there's no way her tiny abdomen could house all her vital organs.

More to the point, thin women do not have big jugs. Period. Breasts, as any woman knows, are composed mainly of fatty tissue, and one of the hazards of dieting is that your tits get smaller before your bum does. Any woman who is skinny and appears to have big hooters is either a) surgically enhanced, or b) wearing a Wonderbra with padding in it. End of story.

Of course, Eidos is marketing Lara Croft as a character which will appeal to both sexes. Obviously her figure will appeal to blokes (the straight ones anyway), but apparently women will like her because she's tough enough to climb up rock faces, shoot men in the face and wander around in the freezing cold in only a pair of shorts and a vest without so much as a pointy nipple in evidence. Lara, you see, has gone from being a female character in an entertaining game to (post Eidos marketing campaign) Girl Power incarnate.

Well, to hell with that. Women don't buy it. In fact, Lara could very easily make us feel inadequate. Not only does she have an impossible figure, but she is capable of feats of strength that most men couldn't muster. I mean, Lara can not only pull her body weight up from arms length, but she can do it whilst going into a handstand. I mean, I've been weight training seriously for 10 years and I can't do that, and doubt very many women could.

Now, you may well ask why such a ridiculous creature like Ms. Croft is threatening to women. Obviously, we're sensible enough as a sex not to take her seriously, but the same cannot be said of impressionable teenage boys. It's a well known fact that most youngsters get their first good look at the female anatomy via porn mags, and come away thinking women have jutting bosoms, airbrushed skin and neatly trimmed body hair. Now, thanks to Lara, they'll also think women are superfit, agile gymnasts with enough stamina to run several marathons back to back. Cheers.

Seriously though, Lara is not the great feminist icon Eidos would have you believe. She's just a fantasy, and one that is pretty damned impossible for us women to live up to. Does she inspire me? Absolutely not, but I'm afraid she'll inspire a lot of other games companies who will see her success and try to emulate with their own over-inflated heroines. Fortunately, I've heard that the female Quake II character is a lot more realistic as far as anatomy's concerned, and she still kicks ass. Now that's one girl I'm looking forward to playing. Lara, get those melons out of your vest and I'll like you a whole lot better...

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## WHERE DO GIRLS FIT IN THE GAMING SCENE?

by Michelle Goulet for Game Girlz

A recent article in the gaming magazine, *Next Generation*, inspired me to form thoughts on a subject I have been pondering on for quite some time: Where do girls fit in on the gaming scene? With this question out in the open you can safely assume that I am a girl, because from what I understand, most guys don't lose a lot of sleep thinking about this subject. The answer I have come to is not an easy one to accept:

Girls don't really "fit" anywhere. They are not excluded from the boys club of PC and Console Gaming, but they aren't included either, at least not the way they should be. You see girls everywhere in games. They are the bouncing blondes holding your trophies at the end of the race, the scantily clad heroines who wiggle and wear next to nothing, and the models in magazine ads wearing thigh-high black boots, holding a game box between their legs and a devilishly flirtatious look on their faces.

Don't get me wrong, I am not a "feminist" or a male-basher. I am, for all intents and purposes, a humanist, as I would and do stand up for the rights of people, not sexes. Having said that, I have to say that this issue of using women as sexual playthings in the gaming industry strikes a chord with me. Not only because I am a girl, but because I have experienced my share of sexual harassment in the gaming world. The majority of people with whom I talk about the subject seem to have a "does it really matter?" attitude. I say it does. I don't see anything productive coming out of this "trend" and I would even venture to say it is actually counterproductive for everyone involved. I think it needs to change, and so I vent my opinions in hopes of helping change along.

One of the counter arguments I have experienced many times is that characters for guys are ideal, most times unnatural or near impossible to achieve body images, and that it should be no different for girls. I agree completely. I don't think I would want to play a homely looking 300 pound female anymore than I would want to play a 105 pound blonde with enormous breasts. The point of contention here is deciding whose ideal body image it is. Most male characters that fit this ideal body image are based on the body image that is ideal to a lot of guys, not girls. Looking at the *Quake2* males I would have to say that although they rock, they are no where near my ideal man. The same goes for most, though not all, female characters. They are the man's ideal image of a girl, not a girl's ideal image of a girl. I think this is the reason why the bimbo with big lips and a matching set of bazooms upsets a lot of gaming girls.

My thoughts on this matter are pretty straightforward. Include females in making female characters. Find out what the ideal female would be for both a man and a woman and work with that. Respect the females the same as you would the males. I'm not sure if I am alone on this but I don't see many male characters running around wearing thongs and wiggling their butts for the player. Fabio's stereotype just doesn't make it into a lot of games, and if

this were the case, I don't think I would have as big of a problem with the "big busted bimbo."

Respecting the female characters is hard when they look like strippers with guns and seem to be nothing more than an erection waiting to happen. Believing that the industry respects females in general is hard when you see ads with women tied up on beds. In my opinion, respect is what most girls are after, and I feel that if the gaming community had more respect for their female characters they would attract the heretofore elusive female market. This doesn't mean that the girls in games have to be some kind of new butch race. Femininity is a big part of being female. This means that girls should be girls. Ideal body images and character aspects that are ideal for females, from a females point of view. I'd be willing to bet that guys would find these females more attractive than the souped-up bimbos they are used to seeing. If sexuality is a major selling point, and a major attraction for the male gamer, then fine, throw in all the sexuality you want, but doing so should not preclude respect for females..

After taking a casual survey of sorts. I found out that most guys I talked to, while not unhappy for the most part with the female stereotypes now found in a multitude of games, wouldn't be any less happy with a character they could respect. A sexy, intelligent, classy woman. Some guys were even a little passionate about wanting to see women that had more than big boobs going for them. I heard things like "I wouldn't not play a game because the chick had small tits," and "There is more to being sexy than big boobs." I would have to say that apart from the odd wise crack about beanpoles and naked bodies¼ I agreed with these guys. Makes me wonder if the gaming industry is even catering to what guys want in the first place. Maybe it's just what they think the guys want.

To sum up, I have to say that I think the gaming industry should give guys a little more credit, and girls a lot more respect, and I hope this will help move the tide in that direction.

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