Part One: Your Interest(s)

If I had a choice of one interest that I could do a paper on for this class, it would have to be about computer games. From the age of 12 to this moment in time, I find playing computer games to be the most enjoyable thing to do in my free time. My all-time favorite game would have to be Diablo 2. It’s great, simple desktop computer game about choosing a hero class of either a Barbarian, Paladin, Amazon, Sorceress, or Necromancer in order to fight the prime evils of hell. Your goal is to defeat all the bosses in each act by leveling up your character’s stats and skills, while also trying to find the best weapons, armors, and accessories to better your character for battle. The game has a level cap to level 99 where each time you gain level, you receive 5 stat points that can be used to improve 4 categories: strength, dexterity, life, and mana. Also, each level up rewards you with 1 skill point that can be used to learn a new skill or improve a previous skill. There are many other mechanics to the game that I can explain, but I don’t want to spoil it for any new noobs to the game. Besides, playing and finding out about them is part of the fun.

I really enjoyed playing this game because it was one of those games you can be on for hours. Where some days you level up and find items you need or just ended up leveling for the day. I remember how determined and goal oriented I was when I played. Making sure I explored every corner of the map, killed every monster, and was in an area where experience point gain would be decent. The most fun would happen when my friends would join in the fun; we all would take over a computer lab just to play. No matter what, online or offline there was always someone to play with; that is what drew me into the game even more. Everyone was each other’s help, criticizer, and competition. With all 11 of my friends playing, we able to find out deeper stuff about the game. Things such as which character build is the best
for each class, what item combo worked the best, and what areas had the best chance of dropping unique weapons. It even got to the point where we made our own clans, Tulip Tree (TT) and Campus View (CV).

When you play a game for a couple of years, you see with your own eyes how the game evolves over time; which is the same case with Diablo 2. I remember join games and seeing other online players clearing and gain levels at accelerated rates, duplicating unique items for others, and instantly finding and defeating bosses as soon as they enter a new level. Over time, using bots in Diablo 2 became the norm.

Bots where used in many areas of Diablo 2. Norton (2017) by Symantec defines bots as, “Bots, or Internet robots, are also known as spiders, crawlers, and web bots. While they may be utilized to perform repetitive jobs, such as indexing a search engine, they often come in the form of malware. Malware bots are used to gain total control over a computer,” (What are bots, 2017). Instead of gaining control of your computer, well for most bots; bots were used in Diablo 2 to help people level faster and find unique items quicker. As a player who spent long hours to find what I need and to level my character right, I find bots to be a form cheating that I do not approve of for myself, but if I’m playing a game with one I say nothing and follow along. I’m torn because there are pros and cons for having a bot run your character. Having a bot as an aid takes most of the difficulty out of the game. It allows people to have a multiple number of high level characters and allows one to become their own merchant in and outside the game. Because of bots, Diablo 2 has just become an item stock market; where you can trade game items and/or real money for items you want. Bots even sit in public chat rooms; spamming about their deals and where to find bot programs like themselves.
The use of bots have impacted the game of Diablo 2 in a more negative way than a positive one. The only positive thing about bots is that it allows new players to be able to level up in half the time without assistance from other players. The main negative affects I see from bot usage is that it doesn’t afford people the chance to enjoy a full story play through of the game, gives the game no challenge, and turn something that is supposed to be fun into another business venture for others.

I believe in the end that using bots will change the future of Diablo 2 for the better because it allows the owners of the game to see how their game has evolved over time. With a clear view the owners can then take the appropriate steps to return the game to back how it used to be. An article called, “Blizzard beats “cheat maker, wins $8.5 million copyright damages,” by Ernesto is a nice step in the right direction. Ernesto (2017) explains how this German company called Bosslaand has been developing and selling everything from hacks to bots for different games developed by Blizzard to their own users (Ernesto, 2017). According to Ernesto (2017), “The court agreed that hacks developed by Bossland effectively bypassed Blizzard’s cheat protection technology “Warden,” violating the DMCA. By reverse engineering the games and allowing users to play modified versions, Bossland infringed Blizzard’s copyrights and allowed its users to do the same;” (Ernesto, 2017). In the end, Blizzard has taken the first steps in counter-acting the use of bots and other things by going after their developers on a larger scale than going after developers one at a time. Blizzard was rewarded as explained by Ernesto (2017), “In a default judgment, the court ordered the German company Bossland to pay over $8.5 million in damages. In addition, the cheat maker is prohibited from marketing or selling its products in the United States,” (Ernesto, 2017).

In conclusion, my thoughts about the damage caused by the use of bots is not felt only by myself. I am just pleased and happy that the game developers decided to fight back and set a standard for there
game. From the article, “Riot games wins $10 million lawsuit against bot-scripting website,” by Suriel Vazquez we can see that this might become a growing trend in an effort for game developers to regain control and balance to their game. Just like with Blizzard, Vazquez (2017) explains how, “Last year, League of Legends developer Riot Games sued the website, which it alleged provided these scripts to people who were leveling up accounts and selling them for a profit. Last month, they won. This week, LeagueSharp is no more,” (Valquez, 2017).

Part 2: In the Media

The Big Bang Theory

Season 2

Episode #3

“The Barbarian Sublimation”

From this particular episode, I have chosen the computer to analysis. Throughout this episode the computer is portrayed as a distraction device; were people prefer to interact with computer over talking to anyone or worrying about normal day tasks. For example, Penny is having a rough day and now has to wait for locksmith to open her door for her after she uses the wrong key in an attempt to unlock her apartment door. Sheldon is pulled away from his computer game and out into the hall by on-goings sounds outside his front door. Because of Sheldon’s curiosity, Sheldon comes across and receives some of the small tearful break down of
Penny who explains how life is not going her way in this moment. Sheldon not really understanding nor caring about Penny’s small break down; invites Penny inside to wait for the locksmith to get to her apartment. As Penny sits on the couch disheartened by the way things are going in her life; Sheldon assumes his position on the couch and readies himself to reconnect to his computer and his game. After reconnecting, Penny start asking him questions about the game and his character where in each moment of being asked a question Sheldon goes A.F.K (away from keyboard) and takes off his headset in order to answer Penny questions quickly to get back to the game. In the end, Sheldon finds out the only way to enjoy his computer game and tend to Penny is to let Penny try the game; which Leonard walks in on Penny and Sheldon playing.

Computers such as desktops and laptops are available to anyone who has the money to purchase them. Of course if you have more money to spend, you can get a computer with even more features and power. The article, “Census: computer ownership, internet connection varies widely across U.S.” by Lee Rainie and D’Vera Cohn explains, “Overall, 84% of U.S. households own a computer, and 73% of U.S. households have a computer with a broadband connection to the internet, the bureau reported,” (Rainie & Cohn, 2014).

In contrast, there are many reasons why people don’t have access to computer system; whether it be because of personal preference or just lack of availability. From what I have researched online, computer availability for students of all ages is a main focus. As technology continues to evolve; so do the ways in which a student can get their hands one also evolves. After reading the article, “6 cheap ways to get a laptop for college,” by HS, I learned about a few
options I can look into if I ever needed a computer as a student myself. HS explains a few ways about how a college student can look into getting a laptop as painless as possible. From looking into to colleges that provide laptops to their students all the way to purchasing a laptop off Craigslist or EBay (HS, 2014).

In the show, Penny uses the computer as an escape from her every day and lifelong problems; exactly like other people in the real world do. I for one can relate to Penny and Sheldon when it comes to this episode because just like Penny there is nothing more relaxing than playing a game on the computer to take the stress out of the day. Playing a computer game can take your mind off everything; being too much into it can cause time to fly by and the next thing you know is that it’s a new day. Like Sheldon, once I get connected I don’t like be disturbed by anyone around me; it’s all about me, my computer, and music.

In contrast, too much of a good thing can be harmful and create new problems; which Penny finds out the hard way. Penny gets so into the game she is playing that she starts to neglect her other responsibilities. It even gets to the point where she doesn’t leave her apartment; unless she has a question for someone about the game. As a past hardcore gamer, I understand that situation very well. For me, it got to the point where I strongly preferred to stay inside than go outside. I would game for hours and only would get up to use the restroom, take a shower, sleep, and get some food.
For Penny, the computer has a negative affect on her life because although she is achieving stuff in the game, she is not achieving anything in the real world or working on the problems in her life that caused her to become addicted to the game in the first place. Although it is funny in the show, that type addiction is very real to some people. I can sit here and say that I have not ever had a gaming addiction because I’ve never let the games intervene with what I had to do for today and keep me away from the people I love. Like everyone else who plays computer games, I have experienced that high you get when you are in a very competitive game that pushes your mind and fingers to their limits; and somehow you find a way to pull off a victory. There is no feeling just like it.

I believe that the computer as a technology is very ethical because there are some many positive things a computer can accomplish and be helpful with in different situations and environments. The question about things being ethical depends on the person behind the technology in my opinion. For example, computers that track peoples’ position by cell phone who are in need of emergency help from the police or firefighters; I find that to be an ethical use of computer technology. Now, if someone was using the same computer technology in order to stalk people, to me that is an unethical use of computer technology.

In 5 to 10 years, I believe the computer will evolve to be even faster at executing tasks and that there will be even integrations applied to computers. All the way to the point to where a single computer will be the only form of entertainment in a household. Even from there the computer can and will still be evolving over the next 15 to 20 years.
In conclusion, this episode of The Big Bang Theory was completely hilarious to me; not because of what Penny went through, but because of how close to home the episode hits me and some other people in regards to computers as a way of leisure.
Bibliography


