

# Hardcore Casual

Bringing back the carebear stare...

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## Gamer Bob says: MMOs suck.

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People often credit WoW's success because, in part, it's a little bit of everything for everyone (in theory at least), and while that's a great way to get into the genre, if you really want to focus on any one aspect you soon find WoW is somewhat limited. Yes WoW has PvP, but it's limited by WoW's PvE side, Blizzard's somewhat disinterest in expanding WoW's PvP, and by the fact that the engine is simply not built for it. Messing around in the BGs or arena is all well and good, but if you really want to PvP you play a game like Guild Wars, DarkFall, or WAR, depending on how far you want to take it. Same goes for the economy; WoW has an auction house and mods built around it, but no one is going to confuse the economic challenges of EVE or ATitD with making gold in WoW. Even for PvE, which is (or should be) WoW's main focus, other games distill the formula and offer more focused gameplay, like the all-instanced PvE of DDO, the hardcore raiding of FFXI, or the casual do anything nature of CoX.

If we were to break down the MMO genre by category (raiding, PvP, economy, questing, graphics, sound, hardware demands, ect), and rate each game on ALL categories, WoW would likely come out with the highest overall total, yet it would not be the winner in any one single category, making it the jack-of-all-trades or most 'mass market' game. This of course is supported by WoW having millions of subs while everyone else is trying to hit 500k (or far less when we throw in more niche games like DF or ATitD).

What's interesting is that overall, WoW players have NOT progressed from the entry game of the genre into other, more focused offerings. Aside from EVE's continual growth, the genre as a whole has not seen subscription numbers grow from the height of EQ1's popularity (500k-ish), and whether a game hits its mark (LotRO) or slightly misses (WAR), subscription numbers don't vary greatly short of the massive disasters (TR, Hellgate). There are more MMOs out now with 100k+ subscribers than prior to WoW's release in 2004, but it would appear that the majority of WoW players don't move on to other games and stay. If anything, they try a game for a month, leave, and either return to WoW or leave the genre altogether.

Tourist jokes aside (not that the tourist problem is a joke, mind you), I've come to this brilliant conclusion: MMOs are just not that fun for most people.

I know, shocking.

With all the time we spend going back and forth on how X game is awesome and your MMO sucks, or how game Y would be so much better with feature Z, the majority of gamers are telling of us ALL our games suck. The whole genre, garbage. And in a way they are right. Why in gods name would I pay \$15 a month to complete 100 kill x mob quests when I could do far more interesting tasks in a single player RPG? Why would I grind up an imbalanced character so I can PvP 'sometimes' when I can just get a FPS for cheap and have all-access to PvP of all flavors?

The 'why' of course is because I like MMOs, a lot, but WoW aside (and hence more support for the 'perfect storm' theory), most people just don't. Beyond the 50-500k that WILL buy into your product, everyone else is just not that interested in the core ideas behind the genre, and short of abandoning that core (like Guild Wars does, and perhaps even Free Realms), no matter what you do you won't attract and keep them. It's not about how great your questing is, or how balanced the PvP turns out, or what form of character progression you go with, those who are not into the genre just can't be bothered with the basics, details be damned.

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## 14 Responses to "Gamer Bob says: MMOs suck."

**Frank Says:**June 30, 2009 at 5:27 pm | [Reply](#)

You're right. WoW was my first MMO and I've tried others, but can't seem to get into them. Plus I get bored with WoW fairly often and let my subscription lapse until I get the bug to play it again. I guess it's the perfect casual MMO.

**Ceadrick Says:**June 30, 2009 at 5:56 pm | [Reply](#)

Ding Ding Ding, I think you have something there. I started playing MMO's back in '98 with UO, moved to EQ, which I played till WOW came out. I played all the rest, but nothing has ever kept my interest like UO, EQ or wow. Most of my friends think I'm nuts spending so much time playing a game. They will play their consoles, like the Wee, and have some fun, but they would never "waste" so much time playing in a persistent world. Like you say, if the companies go after the real market and not the perceived market they will do okay.

**Yeebo Says:**June 30, 2009 at 5:59 pm | [Reply](#)

Sad, but likely very true. Unless you live in South Korea.

**evizaer Says:**June 30, 2009 at 6:03 pm | [Reply](#)

I've been of the opinion that the MMO genre is fundamentally crap for the past four years. I've tried out a number of different MMOs in this time, playing for a few months here and there and even picking up WoW and dropping it again, but I've always come back to thinking that these games just aren't good. They're chock full of boring mechanics, half-assed design, and valueless, endless time sinks that leave people bitter.

On the mechanics side, I wrote a post about how MMORPGs are fundamentally broken. You may find it worth a read.

<http://thatsaterribleidea.blogspot.com/2009/06/save-world-and-level-up.html>

**Slurms Says:**June 30, 2009 at 6:11 pm | [Reply](#)

Heh, while yours is written on a larger scope of the genre, I wrote something up today about bringing the PvP elements of an MMO to an TF2 style of game:

<http://www.multiplaying.net/archives/250>

I'm totally pickin up what you're putting down though. Ive had a hard time getting hardcore into a MMO since DAOC. WAR was close, but I think it was only close because I really wanted it to follow in DAOCs footsteps.

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**Anjin Says:**[June 30, 2009 at 9:24 pm](#) | [Reply](#)

You know, I can't really argue with this. Many WoW fans are WoW fans, not of MMOs in general. The sooner developers figure out who their audience is, the better. And if Free Realms can do it, so can the big boy games.

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**Kessiaan Says:**[June 30, 2009 at 10:45 pm](#) | [Reply](#)

I think the reason EvE keeps growing while other games flounder, more than anything, is that CCP understands MMO gamers in general have always been and will forever be very hardcore compared to the mainstream crowd, and build all their content around that assumption.

Joe Casual whose idea of gaming is playing Madden on the weekends with his buds is never going to be successful in a persistent world of any sort. These games require a large and continuing investment of, at the very least, your free time and money.

WoW is WoW. It's the best game for people getting a taste of what MMOs are like and their sub numbers reflect that. Some go on to other games when they're tired of WoW, but most just quit.

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**ScytheNoire Says:**[July 1, 2009 at 1:50 am](#) | [Reply](#)

It's not MMO, it's the majority of the current generation MMO's. They are all mostly designed the same, and that's the problem. We haven't seen the expanding of the genre, and most are MMORPG's.

I think upcoming games can help change things. I think a lot of people like the idea of their accomplishments in a game meaning something and being permanent. Look at how popular achievements are. And a lot of people like online multiplayer games, that's a given.

It's simply that today's current crop of MMORPG's isn't doing it right. They are old school and don't move beyond the same old thing we've been seeing for the past decade. If they actually took time to innovate and create new forms of the MMO genre, you would see a lot more players.

Of course, this also requires a change in business models, as many gamers who don't play MMO's and many who do and are former MMO players, are not fond of the subscription model or the idea of being forced to both buy a box game and then pay a monthly fee on top of that, no matter if they play for five hours or fifty hours, it's the same fee.

Business models need to change, and the way MMO's are presented need to change. Persistent worlds online with many players isn't the problem, it's the design of those games.

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**Squirrt Says:**[July 1, 2009 at 7:31 am](#) | [Reply](#)

Syn one thing, MMO's are very much about the social aspect. WOW started out with a hard core raiding model requiring 40 players to work together to down bosses and get the cookies. This required a guild, guild leaders, scheduling, websites, and Vent. This type of social interaction, shared experiences, and excitement (I still remember my guilds first kill

of Ragnerous) is what had me hooked on WOW for 3 years. I would say that the last year I was purely staying for the social network of people in my guild than really enjoying the game. This type of interaction and shared experience I feel is what many people look for when they leave WOW for their next MMO. But seldom find it so go back to WOW because at least they can hang with their virtual friends and run a vent instance every once and a while.

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**Rostam Says:**

[July 1, 2009 at 9:59 am](#) | [Reply](#)

Hey Syn, I agree with Squirtt above, you missed the social aspect of MMO's which is why the majority of peopl that play MMO's continue to play them. If you strip out the social side to MMO's and just look at the game itself then they will look fairly bland and inferior to other genres.

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**syncaine Says:**

[July 1, 2009 at 11:17 am](#) | [Reply](#)



But this assumes a player engages in that social aspect, which would be a given if we ignore that WoW (and the genre overall) has continually made changes to improve the solo aspect of the game.

So yes, the core MMO player has that social aspect, either in a multi-game guild or in his/her specific circle in a given MMO. However, Gamer Bob might solo WoW 1-80, keeping to himself and just barely noticing the social side (since at no point is he forced to), and then goes to try other MMOs with that same "I can do whatever I want" mindframe (and depending on the game, he will fail outright because the game might require some level of social)

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**Squirtt Says:**

[July 1, 2009 at 11:50 am](#)



True that 1-80 is possible solo, but the gamer would have to be anti-social to the extreme to do this. Except for the most recent changes in WOW with Rep Grinds and Crafting epix's in the last year this was the only way to get better gear. Via 5, 10, 15, 25, 40 man raids. But once people get into a guild they generally find guild chat and vent to be fun and much more interesting than grinding dailies. The fact that grinding dailies is more the stimulus for the social aspect is more the to a point.

Now that I think about it more I think it has more to do with expectations than anything else. Currently WOW has become that MMO that is very easy to play at ANY level. From mindless, to casual, to hard core, and to spammer buddies. It can be played at any of these levels without a tremendous amount of effort. The players get used to this and then are unable to adjust to other MMO's that are not forgiving.

WAR – You need a good guild that has its shit together at 40 to own in premade scenario's or to effectively defend a fort against a zerg.

EVE – Steep learning curve.

Darkfall – Requires preplanning and imagination.

DDO – Forced Grouping.

I personally feel the reason why WOW has been so successful is that it is easy at so many different levels and has a critical mass population so each individual player can play and be successful at the level they want to play at, of course it does get boring.

**Rostam Says:**

[July 1, 2009 at 10:06 am](#) | [Reply](#)

I've posted this elsewhere, but I've decided to leave the MMO genre. What bothers me the most is that the games are designed to be time sinks and in order to experience the full extent of the game you also must take part in these time sinks in order to ensure your character is strong enough to contribute. A keeping up with the Jones' type of scenario.

Combine that with the fact that many MMO's today have broken games mechanics, the ups and downs of MMO releases, horrible patching cycles and the fact that character development and balanced PvP are mutually exclusive. There are better ways of spending my time.

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**Bonedead Says:**

[July 1, 2009 at 11:22 am](#) | [Reply](#)



Call me anti social but I hate relying on other people to have fun.  
-Gamer Bobby  
"If you ain't first, you're last!"

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