

**The Design And Social Challenges Of
Developing Massively Multiplayer Online Games**

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By

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On my honor as a University student, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid
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ABSTRACT

Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games, otherwise known as MMORPGs or MMOs, are a fast growing sector of the entertainment industry with billions of dollars in revenue every year. With over 11.1 million players on Blizzard's World of Warcraft alone, more and more people are engaging in MMOs. The social aspect of the genre presents unique challenges to developers of the genre. Designers find themselves faced with attempting to appease a wide variety of players who enjoy and pay for their games. MMO players are drawn to the idea of advancing their characters, investing "Avatar Capital" into their online persona and developing a commitment to the game. Players also come from a diverse range of cultures and backgrounds that the game must remain sensitive to, and certain lucrative markets such as China can require extensive changes to the core game during localization. Programming oversights can also lead to complicated situations and game altering bugs and glitches, often complicating the integrity of the community and requiring a careful response from the designers. These problems require the designer to alter their position to that of a social engineer, taking on a new understanding of their players and the reasons people play to create a rich virtual world and keep the game profitable for the company.