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Derek Kwok
San Jose State University, kwokderek@gmail.com

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Gaming - it is a hobby enjoyed by many and easily accessible for all. But what is considered gaming? A game can be classified as something to do for past time or as an amusement. As it is defined in the oxford dictionary "gaming" can be categorized into two definitions: 1.the playing of games developed to teach something or to help solve a problem, as in a military or business situation, or 2. Digital Technology. the playing of computer or video games. According to the definition on Dictionary.com, board games or physical games can still be considered gaming. Definition two is more aligned with what most people associate gaming with, playing video games on a digital platform. Though board games and physical games can be considered gaming, definition two shall be utilized to help define the question, what defines a gamer?

Games like Monopoly, Connect Four, Jenga, or anything along those lines are games but players should not be considered gamers. The main reason being that these are more so party games and not digital based. More often than not, someone who plays these things probably wouldn't call themselves a gamer either. The definition of gaming in today's environment is no longer connotated with such activities. On the other hand, those who play games through a digital medium are more likely to consider themselves a gamer (Tavinor). But is there a distinct line that classifies such an individual?

In modern day society, it is safe to say that many people have played a video game. Whether it be Angry Birds or Candy Crush on the iPhone, or Halo

on the XBox, or Elder Scrolls on a PC, gaming is widely accessible to those in a first world country. It is so accessible to the point that you can probably find a middle aged mom playing Candy Crush in the waiting room of a Dentist office. With all things considered, it brings into question, which one of these players is a gamer? Should the console be a defining factor or should the game they play be accounted for? There are actually several factors that play into what a gamer is and there are often debates about this topic. To begin, let's start with the console/medium in which one games.

Video games can be categorized into three mediums. Console gamers, mobile gamers, and PC gamers. Within the gaming community, there is actually a big divide between these players. It can be specified into three subdivisions - Console & PC vs Mobile, and PC vs Console (Kemerer, Chris, et al). The PC and console fight is essentially irrelevant to the discussion of what defines a gamer because it is mainly an ego fight. Those on PC think console gamers require less skill whereas console gamers think PC gamers have an unfair advantage due to the versatility of using a mouse and keyboard. The biggest debate is whether mobile gamers are "real gamers" or not. This debate came into question once mobile devices advanced to the point where the technology could support things beyond simple games like Minesweeper and Tetris. Far more complex games could be developed for mobile play and companies began to include mobile versions. Big name games like Fortnite and Genshin Impact have a large mobile gaming demographic. There is even

a Call of Duty mobile. Mobile gaming in the recent few years has become such a large market that there are even professional mobile gaming events and phones designed for gaming. Mobile gaming is much more prominent on Eastern parts of the world, mainly Asia, in comparison to Western Countries like America. Despite becoming such a large demographic in the gaming world, many gamers don't consider mobile players real gamers (Kemerer, Chris, et al). This is due to the stigma and stereotype that mobile games require no skill and are played with fingers on a miniature screen rather than with an actual controller and gaming device. Mobile gaming contraptions have gone to the extent of even having cases that mimic gaming controllers or have a built-in fan to cool down the phone (Mayra). At that point, many argue that mobile gaming is just a cheap mimicry or mockery of console/pc gaming.

Another deciding factor that should be taken into consideration when defining a gamer is the types of video games there are. As mentioned earlier, games like Candy Crush, JackBox, Angry Birds, or any Dating Simulator are indeed video games but starkly different from games like Call of Duty, Dark Souls, or Pokemon (Despain). Each genre has a different demographic and player base, from FPS to RPG. They appeal to two different markets within the gaming community. For example, a game like JackBox doesn't require any actual "gaming." It is essentially just a quiz game like Kahoot! where players just submit text. There aren't any tactical movements or controls to learn in

order to play the game. Games like this are created to have fun with friends or be a pastime. The aesthetic of the game is primarily submission. Also the demographic of these games probably do not play these games on a consistent basis. Moms who play Candy Crush in the waiting room probably don't play the game outside of when they are in a waiting room. Their goal of opening the game is to kill some time and not be bored. While those who play a game like Call of Duty want to win their matches and be top of the leaderboard at the end of the game. Or those who play Elder Scrolls want to maximize their gear and find all the hidden secrets within the game (Despain).

The types of games in which someone plays brings another factor into question, those who play casually and those who play seriously. There is a fine line between these two demographics but how a casual gamer and serious gamer is defined can vary. A simple way would be to classify pro gamers vs regular gamers. But even within regular gamers there is a split of how serious they play. There are those who as mentioned before will play a game till every trophy is awarded and every easter egg is acquired. Then there are those who play games like Animal Crossing to kill time and build a nice house, or there are gamers who play in parties with their friends to get the battle royale dub. Each one of these fit on a different spot of the spectrum when gauging how casual or avid a gamer is. There are players who play just to have fun or play with friends, and there are those who want to win and be the best. It also

boils down to how the players themselves view it. Some also don't even consider themselves gamers too. People like my mom or classmates, they play games like Candy Crush and League of Legends on a consistent basis but it is either to just kill time or spend time with their friends online. Apart from that there is a lack of gameplay and they don't consider themselves a gamer.

This brings into light about who you are asking to define a gamer. Though there is a set definition in the Oxford Dictionary for a gamer - "a person who plays games, especially computer or video games," it is still subjective to many. As mentioned earlier, a professional Starcraft player would probably not put a devoted Angry Birds player on the same pedestal as themselves. Let alone someone who plays single player games like Elden Ring or Ghost of Tsushima. There is a sort of elitism that goes on within the demographic of players. Just like how there is a spectrum of how casual to serious a gamer is, each one of those points have different different definitions. Their intentions and goals are all separate from each other.

Ultimately the goal of defining a gamer is much more complex that it appears to be on the surface. There are many nuances to take into consideration when asking this question. The definition of a gamer is sort of a blanket term which doesn't do much help when getting into the specifics of it. Much like how when someone says they are sick, the question that is then asked is what symptoms do you feel? In the case of gaming, numerous

questions can then be followed up with - What games do you play? How long do you play? Why do you play games? Do you play for fun or do you play to win? All of these make this question harder to answer than it really is. It boils down to a very subjective answer that cannot be answered by simple terms.

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