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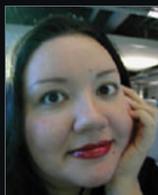
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Game Tokens: Girls, Girls, Girls

By Chickytown - Posted Mar 24, 2004

G4TV STAFF



I'm a girl.** And a gamer. But I would not say I'm a girl gamer, because I hate that term. It really annoys me that some people feel the need to make that distinction, even if part of me understands why they make that distinction. Some use it almost as an empowerment term, and a way to draw attention to the specific wants and needs of the female gamer, while others truly believe there is a difference between girls who game and boys who game. Personally, I think it marginalizes gamers of the

female persuasion, sort of like when the female athletic teams in high schools call their team the "Lady Cougars" or whatever, like, "the ladies think they can play sports, too, isn't that adorable?" But then, I'm one of those people who likes calling everyone "actors", and not messing with "actor" and "actress"...

Guess I'm Just a Touchy Broad

Picky, too.

I just don't think that there would be that big of a difference evident if you pulled one random female gamer and one random male gamer off of the street and asked them what kinds of games they liked. Sure, you might accidentally pick that over-forty lady who's into EverQuest and that mid-twenties dude who likes sports games, but then again, you might get some chick who likes fighting and shooters and some dude who's way into puzzle games and The Sims. It's plain oversimplifying the issue to claim that men like one set of games and women like another. Let's face facts here: nobody likes those crappy Barbie games. And, conversely, everyone likes to blow stuff up real good. They might act like they don't, but they do. There are several industries that bet their bottom lines on that. We like seeing stuff destroyed on tv and in the movies, we like blasting stuff in games, and we like knocking over some kid's block castle when they're not looking. We just do. We're violent, us humans.

I'm a Gamer, You're a Gamer, He's a Gamer, She's a Gamer...

"But Jenni," you whine, "Where are these female gamers you speak of? I don't know any. I wish I did, 'cause I'd ask them out."

The main prob there is that for whatever reason, men self-identify by their hobbies way more than women do. Men will say "I'm a gamer" whereas women will say "Why, yes, I'm single" unless they think you're ugly. Women do play games, tho. Prolly most women. But they wouldn't use that particular pastime as a description of themselves. My own family is a perfect example of this. My mom used to take me and my sisters to the arcade when we were little, and she was really good at Centipede and Ms. Pac-Man. She has her own Game Boy Advance SP, now, and she's addicted to Pokemon Pinball. My mom is special, I guess, as the half-creator of me--but she can't be that unusual. And that's my MOM. My sisters also have a couple of game consoles, handheld and otherwise, in their house. My sisters and my mom wouldn't call themselves gamers. But technically, they are. There's just no cachet for most ladies to say such a thing. Especially since if they did, they'd have tons of boy gamers following them around, proposing. And who wants that? Boys are controller hogs.

That sort of attitude extends even to me. In the past, I never really called myself a gamer, even tho I was crazy insane for the video games. My jerky sisters even cut me off one Christmas and said they wouldn't buy me any more games 'cause I was obsessed with video games and they were sick of it. (And yet, those two were the first to ask me to buy



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them a Nintendo GameCube when they came out. Go figure.) My attitude changed when I started working in the industry and realized that I was WAY more of a gamer than these little jerks who were out there claiming that title. Then I was all, "Step off, punk. I play games for a living. I write player's guides. I'm the gamer here."

Cute? I'm All for Cute.

Given my prickly attitude on "girl gamers" and what not, the safe money would be that I would hate Nintendo of Europe's [new marketing promotion](#) that includes making a Game Boy Advance SP Girls' Edition in a shimmering pink color. But...I don't. I think it's really cute.

Part of my reaction could just be that, the cute thing. I did admit upfront that I am a girl, after all. Most of us like the cute. It's genetic. Many Japanese designers have the same affinity for cute stuff, and that's why 90% of all cute things come from Japan. But back to the Game Boy Advance SP Girls' Edition. I like the graphics they're using on the website and in the special packaging they use for the Game Boy Advance SPs--and the units themselves are a very cool shade of [pink](#), a color I dig.

But another part of my positive reaction, beyond the cuteness of the pink, is that I'm excited that game companies are reaching out to females. It's cool that they're acknowledging that part of their fanbase. And aside from one or two pooty games like the Barbie dealies, they're even pushing games with broad (teehee) appeal to go along with the pretty pink Game Boy Advance SP, such as Mario and Luigi Superstar Saga and Pokemon Ruby. It's pretty much all win here. And if companies do continue to market to women, maybe the handful out there that aren't playing games might pick one up here or there. And then the unthinkable could happen, and the day will come when women do start identifying themselves as gamers.

And then maybe there won't be a need for the distinction of "girl gamers," 'cause almost everyone will be gaming, anyway.

--Jenni Villarreal

**My sister would slap me silly if she heard me call myself a "girl". She hates it when men call women "girls" or whatever. Grown-up ladies, here's a fun experiment, courtesy of my sister: The next time some dude calls you "girl" or a group of your friends "you girls", etc., respond in kind. Call him "boy" or a group of them "boys". Pretty much without exception, they will at the very least look at you funny, and at the very most get REALLY offended. It's a hoot. The angrier they get at being called such a youthful, slightly mocking name, the more likely they are to have meant "girl" in a disparaging way. It's funny 'cause it's true! Note to the sensitive, and those who just like to get themselves all worked up for no reason: I do not mean "boy" in the racial slur way, if people still do that. Not the same thing. But you knew that. Don't play dumb with me.

Bonus Round:

Hey, ladies...and gentlemen! Wanna visit some female-centric, boy-friendly game sites? Here are a few to get you started:

[game girl advance](#)

[Joychix](#)

[Game Girlz](#)

[GameGal](#)

[Grrl Gamer](#)

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