

global network player authority PowerDiePie guilt god Let's Play anael lindex wti authentic mization Skill dungton contest  
game rule system avatar WoW blessing noob kills memor face body fight pop spe ingame PST PVI digital  
religion game analysis representation healing lore relig o-scaps soul diablo class tradition experience with rebirth discussion wedding  
simulation ludology The Last of Us death resurrection funeral runes immersion community symbol salvation image Xbox 360PVE  
narrative







**First of all, for anyone unfamiliar with you or your work, can you briefly introduce yourself, your work and how you got into the field of digital cultures and/or game studies?**

My research into digital games began with my PhD which investigated the phenomenon of *treacherous play* – things like scamming and espionage – in the sci-fi MMOG *EVE Online* (2003). I was interested in what players found attractive in a style of play that I felt was underexamined in game studies. At the time I started my PhD in 2012, *EVE Online* had already been out for 9 years and many elements of it stood in stark contrast to MMOGs like *World of Warcraft* that were dominant – both commercially, but also in the field – at the time.

This interest in underexamined topics led me into studying games like *DayZ* (2018) and the TV show *Survivor* (1997). Folks typically treat games and play as a positive experience, but *DayZ* features highly consequential permanent death that can lead to really upsetting experiences. I wanted to write about our attraction to negatively-valenced experiences in games to challenge some of the dominant thinking about play. As an enormous fan of the TV show *Survivor*, I was drawn to the harshness of the game and the possible parallels of *Survivor*'s popularity with boardgames like *Diplomacy* and the rise of eSports. I write about treacherous play in *EVE*, *DayZ* and *Survivor* in my forthcoming book, *Treacherous Play* (forthc.).

**What drew you to researching kids' use of games like *Fortnite* (2017) and *Minecraft* (2011)?**

Game studies doesn't seem to take children's play seriously. Children's play is typically viewed through one of two dominant perspectives. It's either for its positive educational potential, typical in research of *Minecraft* and of *gamification*, or its



**Play is undoubtedly essential for children’s development and when watching whatever it is they are playing (whether it’s hide-and-seek or *Fortnite*), some kids can get pretty intense and incredibly enthusiastic. So, generally speaking, how do kids’ gaming habits and interactions with games mainly differ from say the 18-35 age demographic?**

I’ve studied a range of player cultures, from *harsh* games like *EVE Online* to *DayZ*, tabletop games like *Warhammer 40,000* (1987-2020), and mobile games like *Candy Crush Saga* (2012). So, viewing children’s play of *Fortnite* (speaking specifically here of that 9-13 years age range) from this perspective, I’d say that children’s play isn’t fundamentally different to adult play. It is of course characterized by different restraints and interests, but often these work to have similar effects. Screen time limits – in place from parents and carers – and screen-time limits – from full time work – for instance.

The main difference is that it is situated within a very different kind of gaming culture, formed primarily on YouTube. Although adult and teen gaming cultures are present on YouTube, the centrality of YouTube to children’s gaming practices can’t really be understated. In part this is due to the way game play is moderated and limited by parents, ensuring that watching play constitutes a larger part of their gaming related media diets. Understanding contemporary children’s play – for its own sake – requires an understanding of games content on YouTube. Overall, I’d say this is an area that game studies as a field has neglected.







## References

*Animal Crossing: New Horizons*, 2020. [video game] (Nintendo Switch) Nintendo EPD, Nintendo.

*Candy Crush Saga*, 2012. [video game] (multiplatform) King, King.

Carter, M. (forthc.) *Treacherous Play*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Carter, M., Moore, K., Mavoa, J., Gaspard, L. and Horst, H., 2020. Children's Perspectives and Attitudes Toward Fortnite 'Addiction'. *Media International Australia* 176(1). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1329878X20921568>.

*DayZ*, 2018. [video game] (Microsoft Windows, Xbox One, PlayStation 4) Bohemia Interactive, Bohemia Interactive.

*Destiny*, 2014. [video game] (PlayStation 3, Playstation 4, Xbox 360, Xbox One) Bungie, Activision and Bungie.

*EVE Online*, 2003. [video game] (Microsoft Windows, MacOS) CCP Games, Simon & Schuster, Atari.

*Fortnite*, 2017. [video game] (multiplatform) Epic Games, Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment, Epic Games.

Maloney, M., Roberts, S. and Caruso, A. (2018). 'Mmm ... I love it, bro!': Performances of masculinity in YouTube gaming. *New Media & Society* 20(5), 1697-1714. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444817703368>.

*Minecraft*, 2011. [video game] (Windows, OSX, Linux) Mojang, Mojang/Microsoft Studios/Sony Computer Entertainment.

Rowling J. K., 1997-2007. *Harry Potter series*. London: Bloomsbury.

*Survivor*, 1997. [TV program] Created by Charlie Parsons for channel Planet 24, owned by Banijay Group.

*Warhammer 40,000*, 1987-2020. [table top game] Games Workshop, Citadel Miniatures, Forge World.