

Foreword

This book addresses the relationship between gender and computer gaming in three contexts. It considers the representation of gender within games themselves, the gender dynamics of gaming culture, and their production within the industry. The comprehensive examination of these issues provided in the included chapters is timely given that computer gaming continues to be perceived as both a male leisure activity and a male dominated industry. It also has wider relevance for understanding barriers to female employment in science and technology more generally, gender segregation in the labour market, and the gendering of leisure within society. Although it addresses these issues primarily from the perspective of social and organisational psychology, it also draws on relevant literature in related areas. This makes the book of relevance to a wide variety of academics, researchers and students, as well as those within the gaming and related industries.

The book sets out to examine both the myths and realities of the gendering of gaming in the specified contexts in order to identify the ways in this can be recognised, challenged and changed in both production and consumption. It effectively demonstrates the economic importance of gaming as an industry and leisure activity in contemporary society. This provides an important context for demonstrating the importance of the examination of women as producers and consumers of games. It also addresses the issue of gendered representation within games and associated interactions in online gaming spaces, and considers possibilities for resistance to traditional gender roles. The recognition that masculinity and femininity are not homogenous categories is important, and the book effectively argues for the need to give greater consideration to this issue when examining game preferences, the gender dynamics of the activity and the industry.

One of the most useful contributions is the presentation of the results of empirical research examining female experiences of working within the gaming industry itself. It also addresses emerging areas of gender and gaming, which have not currently received sustained empirical attention. These include family friendly games and parental mediation, as well as the implications of gendering for the educational use of games.

The final chapter of the book provides an excellent overview of the main issues covered in the earlier chapters. It effectively considers the three separate aspects of the gendering of gaming, but also provides an important consideration of their interrelationships. It identifies current gaps in the empirical and theoretical literature, and makes recommendations for industry and policy makers to address the current gender imbalance in the industry. It locates these identified gaps and recommendations within the wider social, economic and political contexts of the issue.

Overall the book provides an informative and detailed overview of the factors which influence the gendering of computer gaming. Its critical review of the existing literature and identification of future areas for both research and practical action provide an agenda for academics and practitioners alike to challenge both the myths and realities that characterise this issue.

Jo Bryce

University of Central Lancashire, UK

Jo Bryce is Director of the Cyberspace Research Unit, University of Central Lancashire, United Kingdom. Her research focuses on the psychological, social, and forensic aspects of the Internet and related technologies, with a specific focus on their use by young people, associated risk exposure and e-safety. Other interests include the role of ICTs in the commission of criminal offences, online privacy and security, and online piracy and file-sharing.