

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE COMPLETIONIST

JUST AS THERE ARE DIFFERENT TYPES OF GAME, SO THERE ARE DIFFERENT TYPES OF PLAYER - THE MOST COMMON BEING COMPLETIONISTS AND NON-COMPLETIONISTS. THE DIFFERENCE IS THAT COMPLETIONISTS APPROACH A GAME WITH THE INTENT OF FINISHING ALL TASKS AND LEVELS TO 100% AND FROM EVERY ANGLE, WHILE OTHER GAMERS SIMPLY APPROACH A GAME FOR FUN AND CAN EASILY WALK AWAY. **DR NICOLA DAVIES** DISCUSSES THE PSYCHOLOGY BEHIND THE DRIVE TO COMPLETE GAMES - OR NOT...



Whether a gamer is dedicated to finishing the game or not, game developers do everything they can to entice players to continue using their products. For most game developers a complex storyline and dramatic end sequences are a standard lure. Sequels and expansions draw in players who have completed achievements and are looking for more.

Players of shooters like Call of Duty have virtual teams they form from other online players to pit against opposing teams, and they recruit these people on the basis of their achievements in the offline and online versions of the game, as well as by their type of play - such as whether they are completionists.

People can make real friends over their consoles, but it generally starts with grading them in the games as they play. This sort of relationship costs time, money and no small level of commitment to completion. Therefore, because the completionist has "End Game" objectives they will prioritise them over real-world pursuits. For instance, some achievements require extra purchases or particular expenditures of time. MMORPGs, like *Rift* or *World*

of Warcraft, are particularly good at dangling carrots, but consoles are just as guilty.

For 35 hours of your time playing *Halo 4*, 100 Microsoft Points were added to your online account; 100 Points often being given as a cheap reward for activating other Xbox features such as Netflix and watching *Orange is the New Black*. Of course, Netflix has combined both gaming and *Orange is the New Black* with its game *Feisty Chicken*.

The Microsoft Points system for Xbox games was filtered out last year and the company now uses plain cash for online downloads. It uses a different system of extrinsic rewarding, Xbox Live Rewards, that gives credits to user accounts. After a minimum of 5,000 credits are acquired, they are converted to your local currency and placed into your Xbox account to be spent in Xbox stores. Console companies are constantly evolving the best way to

"OUR ABILITY TO HOLD THINGS IN SHORT-TERM MEMORY AND LET GO WHEN COMPLETED IS CALLED THE ZEIGARNIK EFFECT"

