

WOMEN FACING HARASSMENT IN VIDEO GAMES

CREATED BY:

RI

MAY 2022



Growth In Female Gamers

The field of video games has historically been dominated by men. When women join a hobby, like video-gaming, that men believe are specifically meant for them, men may feel insecure. A majority of the time, male gamers are known to initiate video game harassment.

Male gamers usually use stereotypes (some listed below) to hurt females they encounter while playing, attacking them for doing something "not meant for them."



Harassment begins as soon as a girl/woman speaks into her microphone, or even sooner, because a gamer tag could be "too feminine", so the person is automatically assumed to be a girl/woman.

The Female Video Game Experience

Reddit was used to collect all below responses. Most of the responses are answering questions about what the female experience is like while playing Valorant, a popular video game.

Yes I've been telling everyone this and it's terrible :(I hate how men have been. It's been to ridiculous lengths where they create literal STORIES just to shit on me. And reporting does nothing. Valorant needs to do something more serious when a player harasses a women or anyone. Like not being able to play anymore. Or, if a player is constantly getting reported on different accounts they shouldn't be allowed to create more, the pc itself should be blocked from playing valorant. It's unacceptable at this point and men of all ages really won't learn with getting 1 account or even 10 accounts banned constantly. OP said it, you could say nothing do nothing, even try to say call outs and be a team player, and u get harassed. Nothing we do is helping. Avoiding them does nothing. And it especially doesn't help when other women hop on the pick me bandwagon and now the entire team is being assholes and we're losing. I think the only option we'll have soon is to literally stop playing

A lot of guys seem to think that these kinds of posts are implying that men don't get flamed or can't be upset due to harassment in VC. That's not the point. The point is that when you're a girl, you're more likely to get harassed in a sexual manner that's specifically dependent on your gender. Am I going to get upset because some random asshat says he's gonna f--- my mom or that I'm trash? No. But it becomes much more personal and upsetting when I'm trying my best and calling things out but get told to "close my mouth and get back into the kitchen." Targeted harassment based on a specific aspect of yourself that you can't change is much more painful than general flame.

One time i played a comp game by myself and as soon as I said one word every single guy on my team started with the harassment and sexist comments. It was the worst experience ever. Most of the time no one cares or it's not that bad but I'm always afraid to say anything when playing by myself just in case they do.

I also had this one experience where I didn't even say anything at all and someone on my team assumed I was a girl because of my name, so they just started with the sexist comments.

Interviews

Huynh (16) is a female gamer who has been playing Valorant for almost a year and a half.

- "Once they hear I'm a female, they start name calling...and team kill in game too."
- "I don't think the reporting system works because even if you reported someone for harassment, *Riot wouldn't really care."
- "I've gotten friended before by a guy who harassed me in game and was verbally attacking me. He continued it after friending me."



Huynh

****Riot Games is a video game developer and publisher. Valorant is a popular video game that was developed and published by Riot.***

Interviews

Zamzam (16) is a female who plays video games. She plays Valorant and has been playing for a few months.

- "During a competitive match, I was repeatedly being team killed by my teammates once they discovered I was a girl. It was aggravating."
- "I've reported a few people before but I don't think the reporting system works."
- "You have to be at a really low point in your life to attack a person solely based on their gender."
- "The harassment women face isn't just being verbally attacked and people being rude, it is also when men flirt too much and make uncomfortable sexual comments."



Summary

Ever since the pandemic began, more and more women have started playing video games to connect with people and make friends. Unfortunately, many of them deal with sexual harassment and are attacked for being girls. I chose this topic because, as a gamer myself, I don't feel safe being in an environment where I get targeted for something I can't change. It's unfair that I have to be scared of being harassed when I'm just trying to have fun. The ratification of the ERA would provide women with a safe space and would be a legal act that states all genders are equal, therefore there is no dominating gender. The ERA would give women powerful positions in the government, and its ratification would have a trickle-down effect on some more personal spaces, including video gaming.

While exploring this topic, I learned that harassment while playing video games as a girl is becoming something that is considered normal. I'm shocked that women have to fight for basic respect. There should be no reason to harass a woman because of her gender. She should always feel like she is in a safe space. A few solutions to this problem are muting the player that started the harassment, reporting them, or playing with a stack that you feel comfortable with. These are some solutions, but they are not ideal because they still encourage women to stay quiet and to just deal with the harassment. I feel like the best solution would be the ratification of the ERA. I strongly believe that the ERA would protect women and decrease harassment.

This project was made in collaboration with Global Girl Media-Chicago, The Fund for Women's Equality, and the ERA Coalition.

To Learn More

<https://www.womeningames.org/>

<https://magazine.swe.org/gaming-sidebar/>

<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0131613>

Works Cited

Barlowe, K. (2021, August 13). 10 vile comments said to female online gamers. Casino.org Blog. Retrieved April 15, 2022, from <https://www.casino.org/blog/abuse-towards-female-gamers/>

Feldkamp, B. (2020, September 11). Video game safety for girls. Your Teen Magazine. Retrieved April 15, 2022, from <https://yourteenmag.com/technology/gamer-girls>

McLean, L., & Griffiths, M. D. (2018, July 23). Female gamers' experience of online harassment and social support in online gaming: A qualitative study - international journal of mental health and addiction. SpringerLink. Retrieved April 15, 2022, from <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11469-018-9962-0>

xAlyKat. (2020, June 29). Gaming safety for female gamers. WWR Command. Retrieved April 15, 2022, from <https://wwrcommand.com/gaming-safety-for-female-gamers/>

About Me

My name is Ri and I am 16 years old. I attend Roald Amundsen High School. My hobbies consist of gaming, playing the violin, volleyball, and definitely shopping. This is my first time being part of GlobalGirl Media-Chicago, and I joined because I wanted my voice to be heard and to bring light to many problems that women face in real life and online. I hope to encourage more and more people to stand up and help women that are being harassed.

