Abstract

Geeky media, namely video games, have been historically associated with a young, white, male consumer base. Studies show that this demographic is no longer the primary consumer of nerdy media, especially as niche genres like fantasy and science fiction continue to become mainstream. However, marketing efforts and the associated industries still create games, film, and comics with the white, male audience in mind. The stereotypical geek identity has been maintained through this and gatekeeping practices within the community that create a hostile environment from perceived outsiders: women. The stagnation of the geek identity is due in part to this pushback from the community, which blocks women's access to the industry itself, which then leads to the lack of female character representation in geeky media making women and girls all the less likely to pursue careers in said media. This thesis examines these gatekeeping tactics and why the gamer or geek identity continues to be perceived as white and male despite evidence suggesting the geek identity is significantly more nebulous than said narrow demographic.

Honors College
Ball State University
Muncie, IN 47306